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**Maquiladora Employment, Low-Income Households and Gender
Dynamics: A Case Study in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico**

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ABSTRACT

Based on data collected in Juárez, northern Mexico, this thesis argues that the incorporation of low-income women into modern forms of industrial employment, i.e. assembly industries or as called locally 'maquilas', alters patriarchal forms of domination at the household level. As women enter maquila employment the focus of patriarchal control shifts from the private sphere of the home to the public sphere of the workplace. That is, the thesis argues that women's incorporation in maquilas prompted a shift from a private form of patriarchy to a public one, or else a capitalist patriarchy. This said, capitalist patriarchy shaped respondents' lives and their households in varying ways according to respondents' stage in the life course, their households and individual characteristics. Indeed, the complex interrelation between women's life course, and their households, as they intersect with the particular patterns and characteristics of the maquiladora industry and individual workers' characteristics illuminated the heterogeneity of workers' responses to emerging forms of capitalist patriarchy.

While the thesis is grounded on life course analysis with special reference to low-income maquila workers' households, the study is comparative at two different levels. At one level it is inter-generational in that it looks at three different 'industrial generations' of women in Juárez; at a second level it is comparative in that it looks at the case of women maquila workers with respect to non-maquila workers, including the case of low-income housewives. Finally, the thesis analyses women workers' responses to the pace of changes.

Contrary to other studies carried out in Juárez on maquila workers, the data collection for this thesis was not conducted in factory premises but in the low-income settlements. Interviews conducted combined structured and semi-structured interviews and life and work histories. 82 households located in 25 settlements spread across the northern, central and southern parts of low-income Juárez were visited and from those, 33 life and work histories and 6 inter-generational meetings with maquila mothers and maquila daughters formed the core bulk of data. Whilst the main findings point to an emerging form of patriarchal control in women maquila workers' lives, this thesis highlights the heterogeneity among the various generations of maquila workers that form the labour pool related to the changing nature of maquilas in the city over time.

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GLOSSARY

<u>Ayuntamiento de Juárez</u>	Housing and planning body in Juárez
<u>Burritos</u>	Mexican snack
<u>Chavalas</u>	Northern Mexican term for young females
<u>Cantinas</u>	Mexican bar
<u>Cholos</u>	Juveniles (mostly male)
<u>Colonias or Colonias Populares</u>	Low-income settlements
<u>Días de Campo</u>	Day trips
<u>Doble Jornada</u>	Double shift of work
<u>Fraccionamientos</u>	Residential housing areas
<u>Frontera</u>	Northern Mexican border region
<u>Fronterizos</u>	People from the northern Mexican border region
<u>Lunche</u>	Packed lunch in northern Mexico
<u>Patrona</u>	Employer
<u>Señorita</u>	Young virgin female
<u>Rancho</u>	Rural house or hut
<u>Vivienda Popular</u>	Low-income housing
<u>Vivienda Popular del Estado</u>	State housing

ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Alianza de Colonias Populares
CDP	Comité de Defensa Popular
DIF	Desarrollo Integral de la Familia
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ENEU	Encuesta Nacional de Empleo Urbano
ESAF	Encuesta Socioeconómica Anual de la Frontera
INEGI	Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística
INFONAVITS	Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores
IMSS	Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGOS	Non-Governmental Organisations
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organisation
PRONAF	Programa Nacional Fronterizo

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Does the incorporation of low-income Juarese women into modern forms of industrial employment (i.e. maquilas) alter existent patriarchal forms of domination at the household level?

As stated by the above-mentioned research question, the aim of this thesis is to explain the impact of global export-manufacturing on the lives of low-income women, analysed from an interdisciplinary gender perspective. More specifically, it will critically examine the effects of manufacturing for export employment on the gender dynamics of low-income households observed along the life course of low-income women, factory and non-factory workers in Ciudad Juárez, northern Mexico. The thesis focuses on the issues of partner selection, women's labour in the household, and motherhood, because they were selected by respondents during recorded life and work histories, as the most important aspects in their lives. As this thesis will demonstrate, the impact of women's access to assembly industry jobs on their lives can no longer be looked at in terms of whether factory workers are better or worse off upon entering into factory jobs. The issue deserves close investigation into workers' lives, into their different stages in the life course acknowledging not only the changing labour practices in multinationals over time, but also the heterogeneity of the work force. Most importantly, we must take into account women's own responses to this process. Added to the incorporation of a life course approach to the field of studies, the thesis interrogates the validity of the Marginalisation, the Integration and the Exploitation thesis, theoretical perspectives commonly used when explaining the effects that maquila employment has on the lives of local low-income women and on the gender dynamics in their households.

Concerning methodology, the research looks at the case of maquila workers from two industrial generations (the Seventies' workforce and the Eighties' and Nineties' workforce) with respect to both, non-factory workers, and to older women for whom factory employment was not an economic alternative locally.

Main findings reported include that the incorporation of local Juarese women into maquila employment alter patriarchal forms of domination at the household level.

At a theoretical level the thesis argues along with Sylvia Walby that a new form

of patriarchy, a capitalist form, takes place in the households where factory workers interviewed resided. Indeed, a shift from a private patriarchy, where the focus of patriarchal control remains in the household, to a public one, where the site of control takes place in the public sphere or the workplace, was evident in the lives of maquila workers in the sample. Moreover, when exploring the impact of factory employment into workers' lives, data provided from Juárez revealed that whilst the Marginalisation, the Exploitation and the Integration theses constitute an important theoretical starting point when exploring the situation of factory workers, they fell short not only to explain the many changes undergone in multinational corporations' practices over time locally but also, to solve the difficulties that emerge when evaluating any gains or losses women workers may make as a result of their access to maquila jobs. More importantly, these theories fail to acknowledge the heterogeneity of the workforce and the multiplicity of responses recorded among the generations of factory workers to such changes. This point was most visible during the inter-generational discussions when respondents were asked to weigh the advantages of local women's access to factory employment against the disadvantages in front of their mothers. Contradiction, ambivalence and conflict prevailed among the majority of respondents interviewed who saw in their mothers' generation a matter of the past and hardly a role model they could afford to live up to.

Before proceeding, I shall start by giving a brief account of gender as a category of analysis and a definition of gender.

Background: Gender as a Category of Analysis

Initial attempts to consider gender as a category of analysis were made by feminist scholars whose intellectual movement pleaded for the inclusion of women's experiences into prevalent forms of knowledge (Smith, 1974). For decades, feminist scholars objected to 'mainstream' knowledge as it did not include constructions of womanhood and women's experiences when explaining patterns of social inequality (Harding, 1991; Sayers, 1987:68). By incorporating analyses on the specific socially constructed behaviours of females (female roles), different (and subordinate) to those assigned and expected of males (male roles), an area of social phenomena became further illuminated (Daly, 1978). As Acker (1989:238) put it: "society....cannot be

understood without a consideration of gender" (see also Moser, 1993) (see Chapter Two).

For the purposes of the study, the term 'gender' is conceptualised as "cultural interpretations of sex differences" (Oakley, 1972; Ward Gailey, 1987:34). Gender is related to sex differences but not to physiological differences (Brydon and Chant, 1989:2; Hess and Ferree, 1987:14-5). It relates to how society views the relationship of male to man and female to woman and their mutual interrelationship (Cleves Mosse, 1993:2). In other words, it relates to how women and men are conceptualized both individually and as part of wider society. Today, many scholars would argue that whilst male and female roles, and their interrelationship (i.e. gender roles and relations) and interconnections with other systems in specific social arrangements vary historically and geographically (Connell, 1987; Moore, 1994a:20), gender inequalities, reflected in men dominating women in most societies, occur worldwide (Ward Gailey, 1987:68). Clear examples of how these inequalities are conceptualised are seen in the prevalent dichotomies such as public versus private, objective versus subjective, self versus other, reason versus emotion, and culture versus nature, typically associated with male and female. Male roles are typically related to the first of each pair, and female roles to the second (see Abott and Wallace, 1990:5-8; Moore, 1994a).

Whilst the task of exploring and understanding the ways in which gender hierarchies are manifested in societies today is by no means easy, explaining the reasons for gender inequalities, on the other hand, constitutes an even more challenging task.

Feminists, in their attempts to address the issue of gender inequalities, have devised the term 'patriarchy', a key concept used to refer to male dominance or 'the rule of men' over women in most societies (Connell, 1987; Eisenstein, 1981; Jaggar, 1983; Jonasdottir, 1991; Thorne, 1981; Walby, 1995). However, patriarchy, is, and has been, a source of much debate (Barrett, 1980; Pollert, 1996:642; Rowbotham, 1981). Whilst it may seem clear that patriarchy "encapsulates the mechanisms, ideology and social structures which have enabled men throughout much of human history to gain and to maintain their domination over women" (Ramazanoglu, 1994:33), this appears to be but a single definition among the very many recorded in feminist writings.¹ As different versions of the concept of patriarchy are used to present different accounts of the

nature and causes of men's domination over women, it has even been argued that patriarchy, as a concept, simply fails to convey the complexities of the relations between men and women, or the extent of women's resistance to, and transformation of male power (Rowbotham, 1981:365). Moreover, it has even been objected to on the grounds that it is a totalising notion, based on simple biological reductionism (Ramazanoglu, 1994:35; Pollert, 1996:642).² In other words, critics of the concept of patriarchy have dismissed it, as its use procures simplistic, ahistorical statements with no further substance than that women are oppressed because they are women (Smith, 1983:99).

This thesis however does not entirely discard it. I would empathise with scholars who, aware of constructive criticisms that are valid and legitimate, use elaborate forms of the concept to reach better understandings of the position of women in society which ultimately illuminate the path for transformations (e.g. Acker, 1989:235, Walby, 1995). Thus, a contemporary and encompassing notion of patriarchy can prove helpful in addressing unequal divisions of labour, asymmetrical relations between genders and socially constructed systems that place women in a subordinate position to that of men in particular social, historical, economic and political contexts.

Socialist feminists, in their concern with the underlying causes of persistent gender inequalities, the ways in which inequalities are constructed and sustained between the sexes in various arenas of human life, devised the so-called 'dual systems' theory. Borrowing Marxist concepts of capital, socialist feminists coupled them with the concept of patriarchy, or male dominance, previously expounded by pioneer feminists, and established that patriarchy and capitalism sustain gender inequalities (Eisenstein, 1981; Hartmann, 1979). For some socialist feminists, the convergence of patriarchy and capitalism largely determines women's ultimate subordinate position in society (Beechey, 1978; Walby, 1986). They argue that women are not only oppressed by social constructions around femininity which put them in a subjugated role relative to men, but that capitalism also operates by exploiting them as workers within and outside the household. As a result, attempts were made to explain the link between capitalist production and family reproduction, and wage labour and domestic labour in pre- and post-industrialising societies (e.g. Gardiner, 1975). The fruits of such enquiries include both the production-reproduction framework which emerged as the most powerful analytical tool in explaining women's position within and outside the household

(Eisenstein, 1979) and the category 'sexual division of labour' which became a necessary supplement to class and gender analysis (Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978:8; Tong, 1994).

Socialist feminists have, however, endured scathing criticisms for their belief in a convergence of patriarchy and capitalism. Not only have critics been sceptical of the existence of points of contact between these two systems but disagreements have also emerged among those who have found convergence. Indeed, scholars who see patriarchy and capitalism as interconnected systems have conflated them at such different levels that it may seem as though the connections between the two systems are highly debatable. This was the claim of Ramazanoglu (1994:37) who stated: "The problem is....that there is no clear way in which we can know how, or even whether these variables [patriarchy and capitalism] are interconnected." Critics of those who see the two systems as closely related argue that universality fails to explain the context in which connections take place. In other words, by treating women as a unitary category with the same essential interests and capitalism as an unchanging system, the analysis fails in that it assumes either that such connections must take the same form in different situations (critique posed by Adlam, 1979:101) or that there is a harmonious articulation between them (critique posed by Walby, 1983:102) or both.

Another source of tension resulted from the assumptions that patriarchy and capitalism are (or are not) part of one unified system. Whilst scholars such as Hartmann (1979) conceptualised patriarchy and capitalism as two analytically distinct, but interacting systems, others such as Eisenstein (1981) argued that the two systems are so closely interrelated that they could be treated as parts of one system.³ Indeed, many scholars have supported the latter position, as Iris Young emphasised: "if patriarchy and capitalism are manifested in identical social and economic structures they belong to one system not two" (Young, 1981:47; see also Ebert, 1996:70; Walby, 1995).⁴

Finally, whilst early socialist feminists maintained that capitalism and patriarchy, when combined, do not further the cause of women, but have the opposite effect of oppressing them, other scholars have questioned this assertion. Indeed, some scholars have revealed that whilst patriarchy and capitalism can at times converge, oppressing women doubly as women and as workers, at other times, the fulfilment of capitalism can undermine the pursuit of interests of patriarchy. As Tiano (1994) has pointed out: "For

capitalism to benefit maximally from women's participation in both the capitalist and domestic modes of production, the gender-based division of labour and the patriarchal relations that support it must be maintained" (1994: 43). She adds that patriarchal forms of domination would be under threat if women "became so integrated into capitalist relations that they ceased to straddle the capitalist and domestic modes" (*Ibid.*). In other words, the more fully integrated women are into capitalist modes of production, the greater the gender equality that can be achieved.⁵

This thesis will critically engage with Sylvia Walby's contemporary analysis. Walby argues that "any specific empirical instance will embody the effects, not only of patriarchal structures but of capitalism." (Walby, 1995:20). Following Hartmann's claims, Walby does not see both systems as homologous in internal structure. However, she develops the argument further and argues that both systems articulate through six interdependent structures: the patriarchal mode of production, male violence, patriarchal relations in paid work, the state, sexuality and cultural institutions shaping the concepts of masculinity and femininity that form gender relations. It is in this way, she argues, that the degree and form of patriarchal domination are altered or modified. Walby distinguishes between private patriarchy, in which women's oppression is rooted in household production, and public patriarchy, in which their oppression occurs in public arenas such as the state and the work place. An increase in female labour force participation may change the form of patriarchy, as public patriarchy replaces private patriarchy as the principal site of women's oppression (1995:24). Whilst in private patriarchy the expropriation of women's labour "takes place primarily by individual patriarchs within the household..in the public form it is a more collective appropriation" (1995:24). Such shift from private to public patriarchy she terms a capitalist patriarchy. However, patriarchal control at any given site may also change in degree as control shifts to other patriarchal sites. Gender inequality, in her view, then has to be explained through the intersections of patriarchy and capitalism.⁶

Whilst the question of whether the incorporation of women in capitalist relations undermines patriarchal forms of domination remains unsolved, it is increasingly agreed that the interlink between these two systems can take specific forms in varying capitalist societies (Walby, 1995). In other words, the interconnection between capitalism and patriarchy and its impact on gender equality is far from universal (Tiano, 1994). As

McDonough and Harrison (1978:11) clearly envisaged: "It is the task of theoretical work to establish the exact interrelation at specific moments of history between mode of production and structures of patriarchy". Contemporary notions of the concept have given 'context' a major role in our understanding of these interlocking systems (Coole, 1993:180). Moreover, contemporary feminists have also pleaded for the inclusion of imperialism as an added element to explain the subordinated situation of women in the Third World (Mies, 1994a). Indeed, it has been increasingly recognised that capitalism and patriarchy further intersect with imperialism which, in turn, affects women in particular ways, especially those in the Third World. Furthermore, it has even been acknowledged that capitalism, patriarchy and imperialism are not the only causes of women's subordination, as those systems, it is argued, interplay with a myriad of factors including, race, ethnicity, and age. Some socialist feminists even appeared not to be committed to any one of these oppressions as being any more fundamental than any other but to the view that both 'class and gender' have to be understood within a historical process in specific contexts (e.g. Barret and McIntosh, 1979; Barrett, 1980; see also Coole, 1993:180). Contextual research, then, has been widely accepted as necessary in analysis of this kind. However, tensions have also arisen from the consideration that broad structural forces such as patriarchy and capitalism are explanatory and sole determinants of the way gender roles and relations are shaped. Individuals' responses, many would argue, also play a determining role over gender relations.

Henrietta Moore (1994b) for instance, holds that humans are not simply passive receptacles for cultural meanings; rather, they negotiate and interpret meanings as they socially position themselves, participate and construct their self gender roles. Female gender roles, she argues, present a range of possible positions women assume in relation to one another. Thus, daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother expose a woman to a plurality of often discordant feminine discourses (1994b:61). The motivation to "invest in" subject positions, she continues, often depends on the rewards associated with each of these, including both intangible benefits, such as emotional satisfaction, and tangible benefits, such as access to power. Yet, the pressures of multiple and often contradictory expectations often affects a woman's attempts to socially present the role she envisions for herself (1994b:65-67). In sum, Moore views gender constructions as

fluid constructs which active subjects assume, modify, or reject for various conscious and unconscious reasons. In other words, while structural changes could stimulate shifts in gender roles, such shifts are not solely shaped by structural forces or predictable.

Although the assumptions underlying Moore's perspective differ from those of Walby's structuralist approach, Moore's concepts may fill in the gaps left unexplained by Walby's analysis.⁷ That is, since each subject brings her own interpretations and adjustments on her circumstances, and each assimilates the multiplicity of gender roles into her behaviour in her own way (individual responses), unequal gender roles and relations are apt to vary among women.

At this level, whilst it is my aim to contextually explore the interconnections of structural forces, capitalism and patriarchy, along the life course of women in a particular site of the so-called Third World, this thesis also endeavours to account for women's individual responses within that process.

Theoretical Considerations around The Life course Perspective

Much of the recent research on gender has revolved around the experiences of class, race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation, with scant consideration given to the ways in which women's and men's experiences change throughout the life course (Katz and Monk, 1993; Pratt and Hanson, 1993:30). Having said this, time⁸ and change, united throughout life, have been an important premise in experiences of family, community and history (see Abeles and Riley, 1974; Boh, 1989; Foner and Ketzer, 1978; Liben, 1981; Rossi, 1985). Indeed, divergence among people is widely accepted and its increase over the life course is well documented (Campbell *et al*, 1985; Chant, 1991; Featherman, 1983; Hareven and Adams, 1982; Liben, 1981). Moreover, the emergence of the life-span approach proved successful for the areas of social psychology and the sociology of the family in discovering the complexity of family life and, more specifically, as a means of reflecting changes in marital and parental status (Elder, 1977, 1981; Espenshade and Braun, 1982; Teachman, 1982). Surprisingly, gender studies when exploring women's lives in particular focused largely on an over-generalization of women's life path (one that involves a woman marrying and then bearing and caring for children), and in particular one period within that life (that of

intensive care for young children)(Pratt and Hanson, 1993:27). Currently, however, gender studies that concentrate on women's experiences have tended to consider particular aspects of the life course which include: to relate specific phases of the life course and development to social aspects of women's lives (see, for example, Bennet and Morgan, 1993, on female ageing and physical activities; Thompson, 1994, on female teenagers and sexuality, etc.), to consider the life course of women as either incorporating an account of a particular age cohort in relation to changes in wider society (see for example, Baruch and Brooks-Gunn, 1984⁹; Bateson, 1990¹⁰; Dinnerstein, 1992¹¹), to examine chronologically the life course for a particular cohort of women (see for example Allen, 1989) or, to relate the social behaviours of a particular age cohort in particular contexts to previous generations (Oakley, 1987). This thesis will be an attempt to consider some of these aspects of women's life course. More specifically, it will examine selected passages along women's life course such as partner selection during adolescence, household labour experiences as partnered women and motherhood and mothering experiences (as mothers) in relation to wider socio-economic changes and across generations.¹² Reasons for this include the importance that recent literature has given to the issue of time, whether this is individual, family or historical time and the diversity of roles that women (and men) assume (Pratt and Hanson, 1993). Moreover, current gender-focused research has increasingly begun to consider all phases of the life course and development, confirming Bateson's (1990) argument that women (and men) make many new beginnings in life (see for example Allat *et al*, 1987; Faver, 1984; Lopata, 1987; Ozawa, 1989; Rosser, 1991; Rossi, 1985). As Lopata (1987) has pointed out when referring specifically to women: "In the process of becoming and being a woman, the girl will enter and exit a sequence of social roles, which also change across time or in response to particular historical events" (Lopata, 1987:383). Furthermore, recent Western feminist scholarship has increasingly paid attention to the significance of context in shaping women's lives (Katz and Monk, 1993; Pratt and Hanson, 1993; Rosser, 1991) acknowledging that the chronological ages and signals of turning points vary considerably across cultures and generations. In addition, it calls attention to the fact that changing socio-economic conditions not only influence women's roles in the household, women's demands and aspirations, but also female employment across the

life course (Christensen, 1993; Fagnani, 1993; Pratt and Hanson, 1993); something which is a central concern of the current research.

To conclude, gender analyses on the life course of women (and men) have acknowledged that the examination of women's roles, in particular, has to be extended so that they are seen not only as mothers, wives and workers but also in relation to men and to other generations, as well as in domains outside the family such as the workplace (their wider community of kin and friends and co-workers in relation to various social, political and economic institutions) which will vary over their life course (Lopata, 1987; Pratt and Hanson, 1993:20).

Female Paid Employment and the Household Unit seen from the Life course Perspective

Besides research on the life course *per se*, literature at either conceptual or empirical levels on female paid employment and the household unit nexus analysed along the various stages of women's life course, is scarce. Existing literature instead tends to highlight a single period (women married and with small children) and a precise moment (one of intensive caring for young children) which undoubtedly presents only a partial picture (Pratt and Hanson, 1993:28). Consequently, scholars in the field have begun to claim the need for studies that account for the various stages in women's lives as workers. Indeed, it is stated that while marriage and children have an important impact on many women workers' (and men workers') lives, an account that stresses this stage not only overlooks other stages along the life course but also the varying impacts of employment along the life course of women workers, in particular. Indeed, the life course approach has led to an alternative direction in theories around inequality and employment. That is, by adding age into the equation, new paths for the development of theory in employment, households, and gender roles and relations are being paved (Siltanen, 1994:1). Important empirical works along this line include Saraceno's (1992) study in Italy¹³, and Christensen (1993) in the United States.

Moving onto the developing world¹⁴, whilst varying gender dynamics at the household level have been reported in the context of changing global, social and economic conditions, how these interrelate with patterns of female employment and age is undoubtedly an emerging area of enquiry (Chant and McIlwaine, 1995a:18). Existing studies in this field include the works of Blanc and Lloyd (1994) in Ghana¹⁵, Florez *et*

al., (1990) in Colombia; Jelin and Feijoo (1980) in Argentina, Levine and Sunderland Correa (1993) in central Mexico; Momsen (1993) in the rural Caribbean¹⁶; Ojeda de la Peña (1989) in Mexico¹⁷; Scott (1994) in Peru¹⁸; Townsend (1993) in Colombia; and the UN (1993) and Zermeño (1993) in Mexico.¹⁹

On the whole, it can be asserted that while contemporary gender studies on the developing world have taken into account the life course perspective, more research is needed in this new area of gender studies (Pratt and Hanson, 1993). At this conceptual level, the current study attempts to contribute to the emergent field of female paid employment, gender roles and relations along the life course as interconnecting variables helpful in explaining the position of women in society. Next, I shall turn to the issue of export manufacturing in the developing world and low-income women factory workers, issues which will pave the way for the research project here undertaken.

Export-Manufacturing and Female Employment: Global Theoretical Considerations

The last decade of emerging gender and development research has seen an increasing concern with the impact of patriarchy, capitalism and imperialism on the lives of Third World women. Interest in the subject has intensified, particularly as many Third World societies are increasingly becoming part of the global capitalist system (Bose and Acosta Belén, 1995; Nash and Fernández-Kelly, 1983; Ríos Gonzáles, 1990; Sklair, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994). More specifically, as increasing numbers of low-income women have enlarged the pools of local urban waged labour in the newly-formed capitalist economies, the issue of Third World women's double oppression as women and workers within and outside the household has become of great scholarly interest and debate (Mies, 1994a,b). However, in-depth qualitative research on the gender dynamics at the household level along the life course of women factory workers is greatly needed.

Most contemporary scholars in the field would agree that the incorporation of women into global capitalist labour markets has restructured traditional economies in the developing world, not only by increasing the numbers of waged workers but also by incorporating gendered structures of social relations.²⁰ However, there is considerable debate as to the exact nature of the effects of these processes on gender roles and relations (Benería, 1991; Chant, 1991, 1993; Chant and McIlwaine, 1995a; de Oliveira,

1990:35; Elson, 1991a,b; Foo and Lim, 1989; García and de Oliveira, 1994; Joekes, 1985; Lie and Lund, 1994; Lim, 1983, 1990; Malhotra, 1991; Moore, 1988:74 and 109; Pearson, 1991,1994; Safa, 1992; Sklair, 1993; Standing, 1985; Tiano, 1986,1987a,b,1990,1994).

Pioneering theoretical attempts to address the subject of women's¹⁵ labour force participation include the 'Female Marginalisation Thesis'. Written within the framework of the so-called modernization school, the Female Marginalisation Thesis states that capitalist penetration in the Third World reinforces women's loss of control over the means of subsistence production which, in turn, has made women the most oppressed victims in the Third World (León de Leal, 1982; León and Deere, 1986; Vásquez de Miranda, 1977:273). This argument holds that older forms of patriarchy that persisted in peasant households were broken down with the spread of capitalist agriculture but were often replaced with new forms.²¹ Furthermore, the Female Marginalisation Thesis maintains that any form of capitalist industrialization is bound to exclude and isolate most women from productive roles; it confines them to the household or, if financial difficulties arise, restricts women to the informal sector of the economy (see Bronstein, 1982; Rothstein, 1982; Saffioti, 1975; Wolf, 1991). Moreover, it has become commonly accepted that changes in familial social relations are dramatic when there is a shift from subsistence farming to modern industrial employment in household structure and kin networks (see for example, Thompson, 1992:182).²² With the spread of import-substitution industrialization in the developing world after World War II, ^{the} preferred employment of men in capital intensive industries became a widespread phenomenon (Vásquez de Miranda, 1977). With male earnings supporting the entire family, males became increasingly recognised as breadwinners (Blumberg, 1981:41; Newman, 1981:129).

The shifting nature of theoretical approaches in the social sciences has been partly due to changes in policy all over the world (Knorr-Cetina, 1984; Tavakol, 1987:109).²³ The developing world, for instance, after a long period of import substitution and protectionist policies, turned to export-oriented development strategies in a context of global restructuring and structural adjustment²⁴ (Gereffi and Wyman, 1987,1990; Hewitt, et al., 1992; Sklair, 1993, 1994). This restructuring process of the global political economy intensified international competition at company level as

multinationals were welcomed to employ different production strategies like 'offshore sourcing', i.e. production was transferred from First World sites to areas with abundant cheap labour in specific regions of the Third World. Within this context of global transformations, a salient feature, and a central subject of my thesis, is the increasing number of women workers employed in assembly industries in developing economies undergoing economic restructuring (Henderson, 1994; Sklair, 1993,1994; Tiano, 1994:14-15). Since that time, a large body of literature has sprung up within a framework that explores the issue of women's employment in world market factories (e.g. Chant and McIlwaine, 1995a,b; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a,b; Joekees, 1987; Tiano, 1994 among many others).²⁵ However, gender research on export manufacturing is still considered to be in its infancy (Tiano, 1994).

Selected Theories: Global Export Manufacturing and its Impact on Third World Women Workers' Lives

Initial studies on Third World factory workers revealed how capitalist industrialisation exploited Third World women who were, on the whole, defenceless in the face of international capitalism (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a,b). This happened at a time when there emerged a body of gender-focused literature that claimed that it was wrong to simply 'add' women to an analysis of industrialization in the Third World when, in fact, women were (and are) central actors of change and active participants within that process (Lie and Lund, 1994). This line of thought provoked numerous scholarly questions on the situation of Third World women factory workers. Women working under conditions characterised by low-pay, insecurity of employment, exposure to health hazards and with no prospect of promotion, provided a profitable labour force for export-oriented corporations (Mies, 1994a,b; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a). These claims were based on the tenets of the 'New International Division of Labour' (NIDL) (Fröbel *et al.*, 1980). Feminist advocates of the NIDL tradition held that multinational corporations in their thirst for profits preferred recruiting low-income Third World women to perform menial, underpaid jobs due to corporate perceptions that depicted women as docile, unassertive and easily controllable workers, characteristics seen as of great convenience to the corporate law of profit (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a; Mies, 1994a; Nash and Fernández-Kelly, 1983). Thus, the 'nimble fingers' paradigm became widely known. According to this, women factory

workers were seen as more dexterous than men, able to remain seated for longer hours, and with smaller fingers optimal for the high pace manual work required on production lines (Elson and Pearson, 1981,1984). Not surprisingly, lively confrontation emerged between capital/corporate management and feminist activists worldwide. In the academic world, scholars attacked the international capitalist growth model that manipulated Third World women. "The blatant and inhuman use of poor Third World women by men from rich countries and classes.... is based on a patriarchal, sexist, racist ideology which defines women basically as sex objects" (Mies, 1994a: 142). Theoretical developments, in tune with research findings of the era, claimed that the incorporation of Third World women into modern forms of industrial production was an experience of personal degradation and human exploitation for the women concerned (see Elson and Pearson, 1981; Fernández-Kelly, 1983b; Mies, 1994a,b; Nash and Fernández-Kelly, 1983).

More recently, however, there has sprung up literature challenging earlier works (Lim, 1983; 1990; Stoddard, 1987). More interestingly even, some earlier writers have re-evaluated their initial position on the issue, recognising the benefits that factory employment has had on the lives of Third World women. As Pearson, initially a fierce opponent, (1994:349) maintained: "It is indisputable that there are economic benefits to women as the result of their ability to earn factory wages." Women's opportunities to gain an income might not have been the only well-documented advantage associated with women's access to factory jobs. Increasing opportunities to establish an identity outside the household, and to openly socialise with other women have also been reported as direct outcomes of women's incorporation into modern industrial jobs. In fact, greater political consciousness and even militancy have been reported among women factory workers (Salaff, 1981). Some other studies have even found that the expansion of female labour that accompanied export-led growth, can free workers from pre-industrial oppressive patriarchal structures in place at the household level, loosen family bonds, widen marriage choices, broaden spending habits and increase peer group activities (Salaff, 1981; Lim, 1990; Stoddard, 1987).

Whilst theoretically my own research will broadly be embedded in Walby's and Moore's approaches as outlined above, more specifically the study will confront three traditions identified by Tiano (1986; 1994:37-38) which will aid the examination of the

particular gender impacts of export manufacturing jobs on local women's negotiation of gender roles and relations at the household level along women workers' life course. Those traditions are the already mentioned Female Marginalisation Thesis, the Exploitation Thesis and the Integration Thesis.

Before introducing the Integration and the Exploitation Thesis, I shall briefly note that the Female Marginalisation Thesis has recently been the subject of further elaboration. Whilst the initial attempts of the Female Marginalisation Thesis to explain Third World women's position in society explored their non-participation in the capitalist processes, recent studies have shifted their analyses away from the non-incorporation of women in the labour market to the varying dimensions of their marginalisation and the impact this has on gender roles and relations at the household level (see Chant and McIlwaine, 1995a:22). Indeed, the specificity of this marginalisation ranges from the exclusion of a particular group of women from productive employment, for instance, as well as to their concentration on the margins of local labour markets (the often low-paid, unprotected jobs in the informal sector of the economy, for example) (Scott, 1986b:653-4). I should note however that the analysis will consider the gender impacts of women's exclusion from modern forms of industrial production solely to understand the situation of women who are fully incorporated as waged labourers in modern forms of industrial production. By focusing on employment differentiation in a comparative fashion, gender inequalities in the household among women factory workers become greatly illuminated (Acevedo, 1995).

The Exploitation Thesis assumes that the incorporation of women into modern forms of industrial production reinforces unequal gender roles and relations at the household level. Not only do discriminatory hiring practices, sex-segregated labour markets, and low educational levels weaken the position of women in the labour market, but also within the household. Rather than encouraging autonomy and self-reliance, proponents of the Exploitation Thesis hold that women's incorporation into assembly industries elicits workers' submission to patriarchal authority which perpetuates traditionally expected female gender roles within the household unit. According to this view, women participate in manufacturing for exports, not as independent individuals, but as members of patriarchal families whose survival often depends on the woman's wages. Not only are elder daughters forced to quit school and take jobs to support their

parents or to subsidize the educational expenses of their brothers, but often they have little or no control over the disposal of their wages. Furthermore, parents may discourage young women from marrying, living on their own, or quitting their jobs to further their studies. To sum up, under this paradigm, capitalist industrialization provides minimal incomes, few worker benefits, and limited opportunities for advancement for the women concerned. Research on women workers in export manufacturing ascribed to the Exploitation Thesis include the works of Elson and Pearson (1981), Fernández-Kelly (1983a), Fuentes and Ehrenreich (1983) and Pearson (1994).

Despite the similarities between the Exploitation and the Marginalisation Thesis which include the view that capitalist forms of development are not beneficial to low-income women, the essential differences between them are found in the reasons why capitalist forms of development are detrimental for the women concerned. Whilst Marginalisation followers would see women remaining in the periphery of capitalist forms of production and employment, Exploitation Thesis proponents regard women as fully involved in that process but holding a very poor deal which far from benefiting them appears as very disadvantageous. More complex however are the implications both theories envisage with respect to the negotiation of gender roles and relations at the household level. Whilst Marginalisation Thesis proponents draw a better deal for women if they were fully included in modern capitalist forms of development and employment, Exploitation Thesis followers disagree stating that the incorporation of women into modern forms of employment do not offer women any better prospects. Far from it, they maintain that capitalism oppresses female workers doubly as women and as workers.

In contrast, the 'Integration Thesis' assumes that access to assembly industry jobs enhances women's opportunities to challenge patriarchal relations in the household and in society at large. It assumes that women, the traditional victims of restrictive forms of patriarchal domination, have the opportunity to become more autonomous as a result of the cultural and legal liberalization that derives from industrial economies. Proponents of this thesis hold that like other formal jobs, assembly work gives women the material resources to negotiate effectively with male household members because it increases women's bargaining power in the household. Waged work, they continue, gives women access to economic resources that decrease their

dependence on a male partner. It improves women's status in the community and the family. In their view, paid employment enables women to form social bonds with co-workers and to increase their emotional security and personal well-being. In sum, this view argues that industrialization enriches women's opportunities. In exposing women to methods of work organisation, women gain a sense in which they can effectively challenge conventional patriarchal relations both at the household level and in society at large (see for e.g. Lim, 1983; Stoddard, 1987 among others).

Despite their differences, the Exploitation and Integration Thesis share a number of common assumptions. Not only do they hold that women take full part in capitalist forms of development as workers, but that despite low-income women's need to earn an income to support their families, both agree in that patriarchal forms of domination run counter to women's access to paid employment. Interestingly while both conceptualise export manufacturing jobs as superior to women's alternatives of employment locally the impact of their access to such jobs is markedly different. Finally, both, the Integration and Exploitation Theses agree with the Marginalisation Thesis in that women in developing countries tend to hold peripheral positions in capitalist processes of economic development.

The Marginalisation, Integration and Exploitation Theses have been regarded as important instruments when attempting to explore issues of this kind for various reasons: first, because the research that produced the building block for the elaboration of these theoretical currents has a strong basis in feminist theory. Indeed, as Acevedo (1995:66) has put it: "they [the three theses] form part of a feminist critique of social organisation that have excluded or marginalised women from the process of economic development and the production of knowledge". In other words, the three theories converge and prompt the dialogue between development and feminist theorizing. Moreover, it has also been recognised that these perspectives allow interrelated analysis that bridges the gap between macro-level processes of production and micro-level analysis of individuals. In addition, they also allow for studies that look into pre-industrial and post-industrial societies (*Ibid.*). Consequently, these propositions provide a useful starting point for contemporary studies that attempt to critically examine, through the design of complex methodologies, an area of interest to 'developmentalists' and feminists alike.

Criticisms of these theories have also emerged. Many scholars would agree in recognising that transnational corporations have not remained static in their practices (Pearson, 1994; Sklair, 1993) and, more importantly, that Third World women can no longer be regarded as a homogeneous entity (Moore, 1988). In fact, increasingly, literature recognises that any categorical generalization as to the effects of factory employment on women workers' lives in developing economies might fall into the trap of being not only simplistic but also ethnocentric (Moore, 1988:127; Ong, 1994:375; Wolf, 1992). This thesis will therefore make use of these three theses combined with issues of positionality to help account for difference and subjectivity among women factory workers (Tiano, 1994:53). Indeed, the combination of accounts of global phenomena and details on context can be a powerful tool when explaining some of the specific effects that factory employment has on the lives of local women. This trend in contemporary studies on factory employment has gained supporters, many of whom have expressed the need for contextual, historically-specific and in-depth studies on the topic (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a; Wolf, 1992).

To conclude, a complex interrelation between capitalist forms of production, patriarchal forms of domination along some stages in the life course of women and women's own responses to that process will further enlighten the impact of export manufacturing employment on the lives of women workers in the city of Juárez, Mexico. Consideration of the conceptual oppositions of Marginalisation-Integration-Exploitation, production-reproduction and male-female will illuminate the understanding of the complex ways in which the tri-dimensional phases of capitalism-patriarchy-imperialism intersect, shaping gender roles and relations at the household level in various ways along the life course of women. In addition, women's subjective 'positionings' will help illuminate local individual women's responses to their particular circumstances providing thus a complementary view of the effects to macro-economic social and cultural changes.

The relevance of a study of such a nature is grounded on the fact that demands for further research are not only due to the great variability and change across cultures, geographical areas and historical circumstances (Chant, 1996; Pearson, 1994; Safa, 1990:93; Stichter, 1990:26) but also, because industrialization is an issue of great relevance to the situation of Third World women and men (Stichter and Parpart, 1990).

Indeed, my own research highlights the fact that an understanding of the relationship between gender and industrialization is of paramount importance to the daily lives of women and men worldwide. Moreover, the importance of gender research of this nature is stressed by the United Nations 'Decade for Women' report (1994):

"...it is especially important to bring women's aspects and interests into focus at an early stage in the industrialization of developing countries, in order to avoid making the same mistakes already made in industrial societies" (Pietila and Vickers, 1994:89-90).

By challenging current theoretical debates around factory employment and its concomitant effects on the lives of women from their own perspectives,²⁶ a task outlined by Tiano (1994), my research aims to contribute to the complex debate on gender roles and relations and capitalist industrialization in the Third World today. In other words, by listening and recording the experiences of women in Ciudad Juárez, as daughters, wives and mothers, I attempt to evaluate empirically not only the validity of the Marginalisation-Exploitation-Integration debate, but also how concepts of positionality complement them.

More specifically whilst the context of the study is global export manufacturing, my concern is to shed light on selected issues concerning gender variations that are taking place in local Juarenses maquila²⁷ households²⁸. In particular, the main aim of the study is to examine household formation (through women's recorded experiences of partner selection during their adolescence) and household dynamics (through women's recorded experiences of domestic labour as wives and motherhood and mothering as mothers) across three 'industrial' generations of low-income women in Ciudad Juárez, northern Mexico. That is, based on the particular experiences of local women at specific stages of their lives, the household unit will be explored since the time of its formation and throughout its development.

Next, I shall briefly review existing empirical findings on the issues that are the focus of the thesis.

Evidence on the Impact of Export Manufacturing Employment on the Life Course of Women Workers Worldwide: Partner Selection, Domestic Labour and Motherhood

Previous studies of Third World women factory workers offer contrasting views of the link between factory employment and women's dating and mating practices as adolescents. While some (Kung, 1994:127; Lie and Lund, 1994:157) suggest that

female factory workers have more possibilities to meet and get to know men than their non-employed counterparts, others (Chant and McIlwaine, 1995a: 169) maintain that young women assembly workers' long working hours and rigid schedules hinder their ability to socialize with potential mates. In addition, some other research has found less clear situations. In her Hong Kong-based sample, Salaff (1981:105) reports that the incorporation of women into factory employment reduced young workers' chances to meet partners. Whilst her findings suggest that workers engaged "in recreational activities and joined evening and week-end classes as a means of locating like-minded friends", she also states that young women non-factory workers, on the whole, had "greater opportunities for peer activities and freedom by remaining at home" than factory workers (*Ibid.*, 110). On the other hand, Ong's (1987) findings in Malaysia revealed that expected 'progressive' changes in conventional patterns of courtship among factory workers --resulting from women's increasing interactions with males in factories-- had prompted tighter controls on women workers' leisure time locally. Her findings showed that young Malay workers were subject to great moral scrutiny locally which, in turn, made workers less friendly and more submissive than in previous epochs. As Ong (1987:168) put it: "factory discipline....suppressed the spontaneous friendliness of Malay women who [previously] were quick to display affectionate interest in friends and co-workers." Ong's (1987) findings from Malaysia, however, contrast sharply with those of Wolf (1992) in Java. Wolf's (1992) study on Javanese workers showed that "factory work allow[ed] young women.....to meet young men from other villages", encounters which, more often than not, she argued, prompted unsupervised romances and marriages (1992:193).

When turning to data on partnered factory workers' experiences of household labour, the issue appears hotly debated. Whilst most research on the area has reported that workers' fixed schedules force them to delegate some household duties (e.g. child care) while on the line (see Chant and McIlwaine, 1995a:170), on the whole, factory workers are reported to face the double burden of being workers outside and within the household (Tiano, 1994). In their sample, Louise Lamphere and her colleagues (1993) found that factory workers, once wives and mothers, had to "make significant accommodations in how they arranged for childcare and household maintenance" (Lamphere *et al.*, 1993:220). However, not all factory workers appeared able to

continue working upon marriage as evidence has also shown that many are either "handicapped by a lack of childcare facilities" (Kung, 1994:151) or by their husbands' disapproval of their engagement in factory employment (Wolf, 1992:231).

When turning to data on motherhood, recent evidence worldwide seems to confirm that expectations around motherhood and mothering appear to take precedence over women factory workers' roles as income earners (Iglesias, 1985:24; Kung, 1994; Wolf, 1992). Indeed, existing research on social change and factory employment, has reiterated that the incorporation of women into modern forms of industrial production has not meant changes to women's expectations and concepts of motherhood (Lie and Lund, 1994:145). For instance, Kung's (1994:143) study on Taiwanese workers reports that factory mothers who remained working upon marriage and childbirth reported feelings of inadequacy. This, she explains, was due to prevailing expectations of women which mandate that women workers should become full-time home bound mothers once they have children (Ibid.). Moreover, Lie and Lund's (1994:144) research on Malay factory workers revealed the distress caused by the 'double burden' of being 'modern' young wage earners, while having to adjust to 'traditional' expectations when becoming wives and mothers. Similarly, research in Java showed that factory workers in the sample who had children, found factory work schedules incompatible with their ideals of full-time child rearing (Wolf, 1992:222).

To sum up, contradictory findings emerge from existing research on female factory employment and the impact on women workers' lives and households worldwide. Therefore, it is clear that more research is needed to illuminate the circumstances and decisions female factory workers make and the impact their employment has on their lives in relation to local female non-factory workers, and to their new roles and perceptions as adolescents, wives, mothers, and wage workers. As Stichter points out, this is "a fertile field for more such research in the Third World where paid employment for both women and men is growing" (Stichter, 1990:36). This thesis aims to contribute to this controversial debate. By providing empirical evidence from the perspective of different generations of women workers in Juárez, outstanding theoretical issues will be taken on and explored.

Aims and Objectives

The primary rationale for the present research is the attempt to answer questions posed by the simultaneous interrelation between patriarchy and capitalist employment by examining the household unit. It will build on conventional polarizations around the impact of factory employment on women's lives (the Marginalisation, Integration and Exploitation Theses) that deal with gender in relation to capitalist forms of employment but do not account for changes along the life course or over generations of workers.

At a conceptual level, the research will attempt to consider how the temporal perspective illuminates the interrelations between female factory employment and gender ideologies at the household level. In addressing this, I intend to explore systems of gender inequality as a means of revealing gender phenomena, forms of patriarchal domination in the household and their continuity and/or change over generations, from the perspective of women over their lives. With the use of the empirical data I also intend to interrogate the validity of the three thesis, the Marginalisation, the Exploitation and the Integration Thesis in explaining the situation of women factory workers in Juárez. At the empirical level, the study will complement previous studies on the life course of women in order to explore divergencies and similarities in gender ideologies as they relate to factory employment.²⁹ This consideration centres upon socio-economic processes of capitalist transformation that could reinforce patriarchal domination and/or provoke resistance within households. Moreover, gender asymmetries reflecting relationships of power within the household are not only linked with local labour force participation, broad political and economic transformations at the national and international level, but also with women's individual responses to their circumstances.

The arena within which these issues will be examined is the city of Ciudad Juárez, in northern Mexico. It will involve the identification of local gender ideologies and employment patterns from the perspective of temporality and change. Ciudad Juárez is an economy dominated by export manufacturing, and therefore provides a suitable setting in which to examine these issues, not only because it was one of the first Mexican cities to house factories established under legislation creating the export processing zones along the Mexican border in 1966 (Kopinak, 1994:328), but also because research on this area is already available (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a,b; Young and Christopherson, 1986; Young and Fort, 1994; Staudt, 1986). Indeed, Fernández-

Kelly's (1983a) ethnographic research study contains data collected during an earlier period (between the early 1970s and early 1980s) that provides a backdrop against which to explore changes in the lives of local women today. Furthermore, the changing nature of traditional northern Mexico is highlighted in Fernández-Kelly's (1983a) research findings: "[It is not difficult to] believe that [in Ciudad Juárez] a peculiar role reversal that undermines traditional patterns of male authority in the family, is already in existence" (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:134). Finally, Ciudad Juárez while being a source of female employment in maquila industries, also has an increasing informal sector and a smaller non-maquila formal sector. This allows a comparative study across various low-income economic activities apart from assembly industry jobs (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:153).

Whilst the current study is structured around life course, the search for explanations will involve analysis at a number of levels: first, the analysis will be carried out at the level of the household; second, while the main emphasis of the research will be on maquila workers, it will also consider various economic activities available to women locally, including the case of housewives; third, it will be inter-generational, examining groups of women across various 'industrial' generations.

Household Dynamics: Contemporary Perspectives

The present study will take the household unit as the basis for a critical understanding of the dynamics of gender roles and relations along women's life course in Ciudad Juárez. The reason for this is that, as Ojeda de la Peña (1989) maintains: "household analysis contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship not only between partners but also of the interrelations between the household unit and social, economic and cultural factors" (Ojeda de la Peña, 1989:9). Furthermore, households are seen to embrace various aspects of family³⁰ in that they are ^{channels} "important mediators of social and cultural values" which may change through time and across space in line with wider structural shifts ~~"in the mode of production, ... state" economic policies, growth, etc~~ (Chant and McIlwaine, 1995a:5).

Indeed, the broad starting point will be the evolution of social and economic tendencies (historical time) which contribute to our further understanding of the study of female labour force participation (Peña-St Martin, 1994a). As Scott (1986a:649) has

pointed out: "any analysis of the changing position of women... raises questions about the relationship between the general pattern of [economic and social] development and the sexual division of labour.. [in local labour markets]." Following on from this, the local labour market will be considered so as to explore the local gender dynamics in the household unit. This interconnection between female labour force participation and the household unit is clearly established by McIlwaine's (1993:12) study in Costa Rica: "the consideration of the household is fundamental in examining how women in particular are released into the labour force and often in which types of work they are most likely to be employed". That is, the household unit will be central in analysing the interrelation between female labour force participation and the dynamics of the local labour market (see also Lopata, 1987:402). However, households will be analysed from the perspective of the life course of individual workers (individual time).

In particular, the study will address the extent to which the female labour force participation in capitalist forms of employment is likely to provoke changes over time in the selected areas of analysis (partner selection among adolescents, domestic labour among wives/partnered women and motherhood and mothering among mothers) to further flexibility in gender roles, possibly reflecting women workers' greater or less ability to control their own lives. Embodied in this question is whether factory employment in particular, is associated with shifts in gender ideologies.

Household formation, for the purposes of the study, refers to the early period of getting married and being married (Clark, 1991:141). That is, it will take into account the transition from singlehood to marriage or cohabitation. Its relevance in studies of the kind is further clarified by Ojeda de la Peña (1989:14): "transitions in the life course of women such as the path from singlehood to marriage and from marriage to motherhood are not only important passages in the lives of individual women but they determine important turning points in the domestic unit." Within the broader area of household formation, this thesis will particularly focus on women's recorded experiences of partner selection.

In terms of intra-household factors, these are better understood through consideration of household labour and motherhood (among other issues). Including intra-household factors in gender studies is important because these shed light on the extent to which women may gain or lose control over their lives, as Wolf (1990) clearly

demonstrated in her study of women factory workers in Taiwan. Indeed, the examination of intra-household factors involves a study of gender dynamics between men and women within households and provides an insight into the relative power of male and female actors (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Greenhalg, 1985; Guyer and Peters, 1987; Morris, 1990; Whitehead, 1984). Consequently, intra-household factors will provide the means to explore intricate gender dynamics at the household level.

An Inter-generational Perspective

The consideration of longitudinal analyses of labour market and gender roles and relations is an area in need of further research. This is confirmed by Scott (1994), when she states "there is a tendency to stress short-term conjunctural issues without looking at long-run continuities" (Scott, 1994:xiv; see also Chant, 1994:226).

Furthermore, Salaff (1994:xiii) points out that, when researching female factory workers, the consideration of industrial generations can be as illuminating as the consideration of the generation of mothers and the generation of daughters. Indeed, she maintains that examining different work settings (for example, ten years apart) allows further exploration of gender ideologies as macro-economic changes interconnect with the household unit and gender roles and relations. However, this area of inter-generational studies has received little attention to-date. Consequently, my study will take industrial generations as the basis for the inter-generational approach to be used to further illuminate social changes over time in Ciudad Juárez.

A Comparative Study: Female Factory Workers' Households and Other Low-Income Women's Households

This research, whilst focusing on female factory employment on women workers' lives also recognises the importance of looking into the case of women non-factory workers locally. In addition, the study recognises that female factory workers may also take part in other economic activities at certain stages in their lives. Existing research that considers factory employment gives further weight to the validity of the current approach. For example, Lim (1990) argues that "very few studies evaluate the circumstances of women workers in export factories [as women who at different times in their lives]... work in other industries or occupations, or who do not [engage in paid employment] at all" (Lim, 1990:114). It has been recognised that some literature errs

in basing arguments on one type of paid work and one specific moment in women's lives, to finally draw conclusions about the impact of a specific type of employment on women's lives at large, not recognising that women may enter and withdraw from the labour force at different points in their lives, possibly to different types of employment with different connotations for their personal lives and for the negotiation of gender roles and relations at the household level (Wolf, 1992).

My research, in a city dominated by export manufacturing, will incorporate women from low-income households where women participate in non-factory employment including the case of full-time unpaid workers within the household (usually housewives). The purpose behind this is to present a more precise account of the effects of local factory employment (locally called *maquila* employment) on women's lives and the households they belong to.

Thus, the main general research questions I address are:

Has the arrival of factories, specifically *maquilas*, altered patriarchal forms of domination at the household level? What impact has the incorporation of women into assembly industries had on the life course of women workers, in particular in the areas of partner selection, domestic labour and motherhood?

Following on from these general questions, three groups of specific questions are:

i-Adolescents and Partner selection:

Has the incorporation of young single childless women into modern forms of industrial employment altered conventional local forms of dating and mating? (p.162-166 this thesis). How does it vary across generations (or age cohorts of women), and in relation to non-factory workers locally? (See p.167-181 this thesis). Are contemporary younger factory workers more prone to meet and date men without parental supervision than the young workforce of the Seventies? Or other local women? (see p.175-180). What do local low-income women think about this?(see p.181-181).

ii-Wives/ Partnered Women and Household Labour

Do contemporary married factory workers experience heavier, lighter or similar burdens in the household than married women in other occupational activities? (see p. 200-209 this thesis). What are the gender dynamics in terms of household labour in households containing a 'factory couple'? (p.209-210) What do women from different generations and occupations think of the household burdens of partnered factory workers locally?

(see p. 212-213 this thesis).

lii- Mothers and their concepts of Motherhood and Practices of Mothering

Do factory mothers find factory employment incompatible with motherhood throughout their life course? (See p.227-230 this thesis) In what ways do their experiences relate to those of women a generation earlier or later and to those of women in alternative economic activities including full time housewives and mothers?(see p.225-227 this thesis). What do local women think of factory workers' roles as mothers?(see p.232-232 this thesis)

Despite the fact that this thesis is time and place specific, I aim to contribute to the complex debate surrounding social change in developing countries as a result of capitalist modes of development. However, it is important to note that this study is the beginning and not the end of a specific academic enquiry.

Organisation of Chapters

Chapter Two, introduces the methodology used. A thorough examination of the methods used and a discussion of constraints and opportunities identified in the course of the development of this research are presented. In Chapter Three, The New International Division of Labour and its impact on the peripheral labour markets provides the theoretical core and introduces the Juárez labour market. It conceptualises Ciudad Juárez as a peripheral city with special focus on its labour market and low-income populations insertion into maquila jobs. The chapter illustrates how export-led growth strategies shape and constrain Juárez' employment patterns over time. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role played by maquilas in restructuring the gender and age composition of the workforce locally. Chapter Four presents general socio-economic data for the women in the sample and the households to which they belonged emphasizing main trends across generations of factory workers. Prevalent ideologies of gender and age, households' socio-economic data and individual characteristics pave the way for an analysis of factory workers' experiences of partner selection. Chapter Five on partner selection indicates that while older generations of local women had very little say in choosing the partners they wished to marry, contemporary women, and, in particular, factory workers, experience more freedom in selecting partners. The chapter highlights the role of dance-halls as a new setting for

factory workers' dating and mating. A central finding of the research is presented in Chapter Six, as gains in autonomy in partner selection do not necessarily translate into gains at the household level. Data on partnered women's experiences of household labour revealed that partnered factory workers faced constraints in the fulfilment of their roles as wives and mothers, something registered to a lesser degree among married women in other occupations locally. In registering and analysing the experiences of three generations of women, Chapter Seven examines changing practices of mothering among mothers in the sample. On the whole, factory workers struggled to develop their own mothering in the face of conflicting messages around their roles as mothers and workers. The study concludes with a summary of the findings and future research suggestions.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. For instance, Hartmann (1979:11) defines patriarchy as "a set of social relations between men and women, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. The material base upon which patriarchy rests lies, she argues, most fundamentally in men's control over women's labor power". "Men maintain this control", she continues, by excluding women from access to essential productive resources and by restricting women's sexuality". Jonasdottir (1991:23) instead argues "I use the term patriarchy to designate a social and political power system". Acker (1989:239) sees patriarchy as "a tool for analysis..of how gender is implicated in all social processes. ..about how the subordination of women is continually reproduced". Anthropologist Goldberg (1977:25) defines it: "any system of organization -political, economic, industrial, financial, religious or social- in which the overwhelming number of upper positions in hierarchies are occupied by males".

2. Pollert (1996) criticises the use feminists have made of the concept of patriarchy for falling into a tautological circle. She maintains that the use of the concept is hopelessly unclear as many feminists use it to describe the situation of women (i.e. women are subordinated in society) and others to explain the situation of women (i.e. women are subordinated in society) (*Ibid.*,642). At this point, I would support Walby's (1989) argument that the fact that many scholars use the term in different ways should not come as a surprise. Its use in different ways can further enlighten the development and refinement of theories on the concept (*Ibid.*,213-4).

3. I include myself among those who see only one system such as Eisenstein (1981) who maintains that the two systems are so closely interrelated that they become part of one. Whereas capitalism establishes the law of profit, patriarchy establishes some discipline or order.

4. Having said that, Iris Young (1981) herself admits that this criticism is an inherent flaw of any dualist analysis.

5. Undoubtedly, the other question: "Do patriarchal forms of domination undermine the accomplishment of capitalist goals?" also applies, but goes beyond the scope of this study.

6. Feminist scholars have, however, attributed different causes to existing gender inequalities. The tenets of radical feminists, for instance, are based on the belief that patriarchy, or male dominance sustains gender inequalities (Millet, 1970). Radical feminists claim that as societies are founded on accentuated patterns of patriarchy, it has ultimately forced women into oppressive gender roles (Coveney, *et al.*, 1984; MacKinnon, 1982; Miller, 1965). In fact, for them the male-female relationship constituted the paradigm for all power relationships (Daly, 1973; Elshtain, 1981; French, 1985; Millet, 1970). Parallel to the emergence of this approach, were the scholarly works of marxist feminists who explained gender inequalities in the context of capitalist societies. Their theory starts from the assertion that unequal gender roles originated in private ownership. Capitalism, under this thesis, explains gender inequalities as the making of women as a single differentiated class, subordinated to that of men (Dalla

Costa and James, 1972). Thus, private ownership of the means of production by relatively few (males) may have introduced a class system under which men were more privileged than women (Engels, 1984 ed.; Flax, 1981; Foreman, 1977). Whilst the initial views of radicals and marxist feminists were deemed 'unconvincing' (Hartmann, 1981), a new line of thought commanded by socialist feminists later emerged and constitutes the foundations of this thesis.

7. For a detailed discussion of how structure and agency complement each other at a theoretical level in feminist analysis, see Wharton (1991).

8. The concept of time, seen from the perspective of philosophers as a single phenomenon over which individuals have no absolute control, will not be the concern here (for a discussion see Gell, 1992). Time, for the purpose of this thesis will be directly associated with human biological age and individual responses arising from human development (Allat and Keil, 1987:1).

9. The Baruch and Brooks Gunn's (1984) British collection "Women in Midlife" includes essays on the influences of economic conditions, ideologies and the normative timing of marriage and child bearing, and the associated problems women face, the quality of life they experience and the powers they exercise.

10. Bateson's (1990) study portrays five successful women shaping their professional and personal lives as they confront losses and opportunities.

11. Dinnerstein's (1992) study looks at married midlife women who have turned from home-making to business and professional careers. It examines how they negotiate changing roles within the family as they develop new aspirations and self-images.

12. I should note that the way the thesis was structured in no way reflects a normativity of sequence in the stages of all the respondents. Indeed, whilst I started with partner selection, moved onto partnered women's labour and concluded with motherhood, I should highlight that some women as daughters in the parental households were also single mothers. Other who lived with male partners had no children, and so forth. Having said that, many respondents did follow the pattern suggested.

13. Saraceno's (1992) study reveals how three cohorts of women can have very different patterns of labour force participation, varying in terms of their age of entry into the market and continuity of employment. These differences reflect changes in gender ideologies, marital laws, educational provision and restructuring of the Italian economy.

14. The terms 'developing world', 'Third World' and 'the South' will be used interchangeably in the thesis to mean the countries in Latin America, Africa and South East Asia.

15. Blanc and Lloyd's (1994) research findings suggest that the specific choices available to women - such as marital status and employment - as well as those actually chosen for them - such as fertility and child care arrangements - vary over the life cycle. These elements, they maintain, interact with one another to form patterns which reflect a balancing of roles as women respond to shifting responsibilities.

16.Momsen's (1993) study in the rural Caribbean suggests that Caribbean women engage in work for pay across much of their life course. In general, her findings suggest that rates of participation drop only after the child-bearing years rather than during them. Furthermore, at every stage of life, she points out, the women's work experience differs from that of men of their peer group. Additionally, though women retire from the workforce at younger ages than men, she found that they often continue in unpaid labour, assisting adult daughters with home duties or expanding their work on small-scale farms to help feed grandchildren.

17.Ojeda de la Peña's (1989) study examines the life course of Mexican women including the Northern Mexican region's perspective as an adjunct to an overall picture of the life-style of women in Mexico.

18.Scott's (1994) study in Peru looks at the variations in occupational mobility in the course of people's working lives. Her findings suggest an extensive movement between the formal and informal sectors. Formal sector jobs were not more stable than informal ones as expected. Finally, she states that men on the whole, were associated with higher skilled, better paid jobs and women with lower paid, dead-end jobs.

19.Zermeno's (1993) study "Children of Free Trade" examines the lives of children along the northern Mexican border and their employment opportunities, or else, lack of them, as a result of the NAFTA agreement which has considerably reduced agriculture-related job opportunities for the Mexican poor.

20.Literature on the are include the works of ECLAC, 1990; Elson and Pearson, 1981; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:190, 1983b: 209-11; Hein, 1986; Humphrey, 1987; Mies, 1994a,b; Moore, 1988:74; Pearson, 1994:339; Sklair, 1993; Tiano, 1994, among many others.

21.For instance, Deere's (1977) study in Peru, shows how the impoverishment of female-headed households obliged many women to resort to extended household residence with their partners (see also Thompson, 1992:175 on urban Mexican households).

22.Thompson's (1992) study in Mexico identifies three distinct paths that households take as a result of the 'proletarianization': first, the development of households combining wage and market earnings supplemented by subsistence; second, extension of the relatively wage-centred proletarian household; and third, a permanent urban migration (see also, Martínez and Valenzuela, 1986 on increase in extended households in Chile).

23.Scholars interested in the construction of knowledge have maintained the relevance that historical events or factual phenomena have on the construction of knowledge. Tavakol (1987:109), for instance argues that historical events as they are manifested in changes of the social-political-economic order are essential determinants of knowledge tendencies. However, he also distinguishes other interrelated factors such as political thought, science, philosophy and religion. Knorr-Cetina's (1984) argument in his chapter entitled 'the fabrication of facts', holds a similar view but differentiates between internal and external factors.

24. As a result of the debt crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many Third World countries had to turn to international financial institutions to help repay or re-negotiate their loans and debt servicing commitments. Structural Adjustment Programmes were initiated in most of the developing world under pressure, particularly by the IMF and the World Bank, which would only negotiate the rescheduling of loans or provision of new finance if 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' were implemented. The overall aim of this policy is to reduce the balance-of-payments deficit, by increasing exports and reducing imports. This type of economic adjustment is based on the belief that growth can only be achieved through the operation of the free market and has attracted substantial criticisms (Afshar and Dennis, 1992; Benería, 1991; Benería and Feldman, 1992; Sparr, 1994).

25. Research has drawn on case study material on women workers in various countries of the developing world (e.g. Malaysia, Singapore, Mexico, Morocco, Korea, Taiwan, China, the Philippines, etc.) to understand the ways in which women's subordinate position in different societies has enabled capital to utilise their labour to corporate advantage.

26. For a further explanation of the significance of studies that reveal accounts of social life from the perspectives of poor women in the Third World, see Harding (1991).

27. The terms 'maquila', 'maquilas', and 'maquiladora' will be used interchangeably to mean assembly industries in Mexico (see Sklair, 1993:10).

28. The term 'Juarese maquila household' refers to Mexican households located in the city of Juárez that derive their income from the work of one, or more than one, household member working for local assembly industries.

29. Fernández-Kelly's (1983a) book 'For We Are Sold, I and My People', examines the effects of female labour force participation in maquilas on women workers' lives. Her Juárez-based ethnographic account depicts manufacturing operations in the face of capitalist expansion as highly detrimental to women locally. Whilst she acknowledges the heterogeneity of the workforce, she highlights the resulting deterioration of women's alternatives as individuals and members of families as a result of the arrival of these industries in Juárez. Susan Tiano's (1994) book 'Patriarchy on the Line' presents a sociological analysis of the impact of women's work on maquilas. Her Mexicali-based findings highlight the controversial effects this type of employment has on workers locally. Her balanced accounts derived from her observations of service sector workers compared to maquila workers.

30. Households are defined as social units whose members share residence and reproduction activities (income generation, consumption, and domestic chores or domestic production of services). Households include members who may or may not be relatives (Brydon and Chant, 1989:9; Chant, 1996:11; González De la Rocha, 1994:4). A family, on the other hand, is defined largely in terms of kin relationships (by consanguineal or blood and affinal or marriage ties) rather than common residence, although these often overlap (Brydon and Chant, 1989:8-11; Mcllwaine, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

Research Methods

The idea that feminism has a method of conducting research that is specific to it has generated a great deal of debate. Disagreements abound not only because the term 'feminism' per se is a highly contentious one but also because to-date many scholars, mostly non-feminists, find feminist modes of research enquiry controversial (Holmwood, 1995; McLennan, 1995).

Feminist literature stating the need for feminist research methods began to appear in the Eighties when theoretical efforts moved beyond the simple task of criticising existing forms of knowledge production. Dorothy Smith's 'Every Day World' paper, for instance, stated that as most women worldwide lead their lives in significantly different ways to the way men do (due to the kinds of jobs assigned to them, jobs most men do not want to do), understanding the lives of women helps discover not only the reality of the male world in which men and women live but also the concepts that rule male dominated societies (Smith, 1987). As literature in the latter part of the Eighties and Nineties documenting women's lives multiplied, the viewpoint of women presented as an alternative to the 'all-encompassing' male dominant theorizing became increasingly recognised as an axiomatic feature of feminist research (see e.g. Folbre, 1986; Harding, 1991:268; Jaggar, 1989:92; Maynard, 1994; Ramanozoglou, 1994:60; Reinharz with the assistance of Davidman, 1992; Stanley and Wise, 1993). A clear example is Sandra Harding's (1991) publication 'Whose Science, Whose Knowledge?' where she developed the notion of a 'feminist method'. By exploring the foundations of concepts such as methodology, methods and epistemology, Harding endeavoured to pinpoint the very heart of feminist research.¹

Harding contends that the term 'method' refers to all three elements: methodology, methods and epistemology and proceeds to criticise the methodological tools used in the processes of conventional theorizing (see also Haraway, 1988). Moreover, Harding claims that in order to generate less partial and distorted scholarship, scientists should be aware of the partial scope of their claims (1991:48). A feminist method, she argues, can best challenge ambitious scholarly projects which claim to start from no particular standpoint but to search for the understanding of 'reality'. In her own words: "the view from their [women's] perspectives could be used to generate research and scholarship

that would provide less partial and distorted accounts of nature and social relations than conventional work in the natural and social sciences, which claimed to start from no particular [standpoint]... but simply to seek the *truth*" (stress as in original, 1991:268; see also Abu-Lughod, 1993; Hekman, 1997).

These claims, however, have not been spared from criticism. Challenges to a notion of a (unitary) woman's standpoint and the plausibility of a single feminist method emerged as a result of the vast literatures that have documented the various different experiences of women worldwide (Lugones and Spelman, 1983; Reay, 1996). An encompassing approach which could explain the experiences of all women was thus regarded, at best, as unconvincing and, at worst, as simplistic and ethnocentric (Anthias and Yuval-Davies, 1984). As Moore pointed out: "there is the danger of assuming that there is a unitary woman's perspective or point of view which can be seen to be held by an identifiable sociological category *woman*" (stress as in original, Moore, 1988:188). In other words, as women are to be found in every class, race and culture, critics hold, it is doubtful whether there could be a single female standpoint (Martin and Mohanty, 1986:192; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981) or that one female group's perspective could be more real or precise than others (Nielsen, 1990:25; Wolf, 1996:6). Notwithstanding this, feminist research methods still focus on the powerful influence of gender divisions on social life, a primary characteristic of feminist research practice (see Maynard, 1994:15; Stanley, 1992). Clearly, differences among women have opened up possibilities for the existence of various standpoints (see Zalewski, 1993), of multiple methodologies and, ultimately, of various feminist methods (Bell, 1993a). The relevance of such a claim to this thesis stems from the fact that the methodology, analysis and process of interpretation used in the study focuses on women's experiences and accounts. Moreover, as a Colombian woman doing research on Mexican women, and in the light of feminist considerations of the issue of difference, analysis of the data and interpretation presented here are not considered more or less valid than other accounts provided, but different and complementary to a growing body of research in the area of gender and employment in northern Mexico.

More generally, the elaboration of this thesis has used a gender aware / feminist approach. Such perspective ultimately purports to bring to the surface issues of central concern to the women respondents (Roberts, 1981). Conventional scientific enquiry has

been criticised for its concern with males (Grady, 1981) permeated by an illusion of objectivity (Stanley and Wise, 1993) and in many instances with a simplistic and superficial analysis of quantitative data which incorporates males and females together allowing little or no room for difference in the experiences of men and women (Jayaratne, 1983). It is in this light that the methodology here used is considered feminist. This said, conducting research on women alone when doing gender research has been challenged on many grounds. Glucksmann (1994), for instance, claims partial scope and non-neutrality for studies which rely on women's accounts alone. She claims that as a general rule, individuals do not necessarily possess sufficient knowledge to explain everything about their lives. For this reason she judges inaccurate any knowledge purely grounded on personal accounts. In addition, in the particular case of women, she maintains that precisely because subordination is a central aspect of women's lives, their accounts are bound to be tainted with partiality. Townsend and her collaborators (1995:8) provide material to answer the criticisms posed by Glucksmann. Townsend, in response, states that the task of identifying 'the expert' is a recognised fundamental problem in all social sciences. She also highlights the fact that whilst women's views about 'reality' might differ from interpretations given by other subjects, there is no reason why women's accounts and experiences should be less valid than men's accounts, for example (see also, Harding, 1991:268; Oakley, 1974; Stanley and Wise, 1990).

My own research closely observes the lives of women and whilst rejecting approaches that assume that science is value neutral and that the scientific method protects against the contamination of findings by subjectivity (Wittig, 1985), it attempts to engage in sensitive and detailed understanding of the women respondents' own contexts and into their lives (as discussed by Fonow and Cook, 1991; Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991:90). In tune with this approach is also the recognition that the fact that I, a female Latin American conducted research on Mexican women shaped the data collection and analysis here presented. Contemporary feminist scholars in their concern with issues of context, difference and power among women have directed attention to the relationship of the researcher with her research subjects (see e.g. Phoenix, 1994). Whilst feminist scholars in the 1970s and 1980s spent a considerable amount of time focusing on the power relations between males and females in various societies and

contexts, the 1990s have witnessed an increasing concern with scholars' own experiences as researchers and the power relations that embed their relationship with respondents (Skeggs, 1994:80; Townsend in collaboration with Arrevillaga, *et al.*, 1995 chapter 4).

Early feminist writings on methodologies supported the view that feminist research seeking to understand women's experiences should be conducted by women alone (Golde, 1970; Cesara, 1982). These early feminists' claims, grounded on a global sisterhood which assumed that all women shared a particular type of oppression (derived from patriarchal forms of domination), put female researchers in the privileged position of understanding their female respondents' circumstances. As feminist Carmen Diana Deere recalls: "Fuelled by the emancipatory discourse of *making women's work visible*, my generation [1970s] often assumed that the common bond of sisterhood was sufficient to allow us to capture and interpret the experience of women in heterogeneous cultural settings (stress as in original, 1996:vii).

Differences on the grounds of race, age, class and ethnicity entered feminist research (McIlwaine, 1995) and methodologies and impeded the notion of similarity between female researchers and their subjects on the basis of gender, due to cultural, racial and class differences (Caplan, 1993:21; Kohler Riessman, 1987). As Phoenix (1994:50) states: "simply being women discussing *women's issues* in the context of a research [project] is not sufficient for the establishment of rapport and the seamless flow of an interview" (stress as in original). In the face of a vast literature that has undertaken the challenge to plea for a shared commonality in the midst of differences (Marshall, 1994:114; Tong, 1994:237-8), my thesis is based on the premise that whilst women might experience and live daily under the oppression of sexist structures, this does not mean that the nature and characteristics of it are by any means similar, but are specific to particular social, cultural, political and economic contexts (see Ramazanoglu, 1994:58). Finally, whilst early definitions of feminist research and methods were centred on the creation of knowledge about women through women, later works have questioned these premises in fundamental ways (see Kelly *et al.*, 1994:32-34). Understandings of the lives of men from women's perspectives have also begun to be seen as enlightening of the relationships that arise between women and men worldwide (Gelsthorpe, 1990; Stanko, 1994:93).² Thus, my research, whilst focusing on women's

views and perspectives, documents the lives of women and their relationships with partners in the context of a changing society.

Feminist Research and the Case Study Method

Intrinsic in the elaboration of feminist research is the paramount role given to context, specificity and difference when researching women's lives. Scrutiny of generalisations through research processes that bring women's experiences to the fore can disentangle the male-dominated societal arrangements in which their lives operate (Mies, 1994a). Such precepts came from a body of knowledge which recognised that women's experiences, their lives, histories and struggles were not part of 'mainstream' knowledge (Fonow and Cook, 1991). Not surprisingly, research tools which allow room for specificity and detail have been highly sought after by gender aware scholarship. Case studies³, for instance as tools that permit scholars to focus on a single event, individual process or community have increasingly been regarded as fruitful avenues in the area of feminist scholarship and theory testing. As main providers of specificity and detail, case studies allowed feminist scholars not only to put women at the core of social research and scholarly interest, but also to establish when a generalisation is invalid. Case studies have also been regarded as effective tools when exploring concepts (e.g. the sexual division of labour, see Garmanikow, 1978; Young, 1978) and when attempting to analyse data of a cross-cultural nature (see Hill, 1991 cited in Reinharz, 1992:166). Indeed, case studies have proved to be most flexible as they have allowed social scientists to document the lives of individual women or of a group of women, and sometimes groups of individual cases are combined with particular structural changes or processes. Finally, case studies can be useful in areas of feminist action (Caplan, 1980). Case studies have proved useful tools in aiding analysis of changes in a phenomenon over time and/or in documenting the significance of a phenomenon for future events (Reinharz, 1992:164).

Case studies however, have been criticised for their limited scope and have been challenged as research tools in that they cannot establish a generalization (see review of criticisms in Reinharz, 1992).⁴ Scholars, in response to this, have maintained that whilst a detailed case study might help illuminate the exception instead of the rule, case study after case study can certainly prove useful in the area of theory building

(Garmanikow, 1978). Indeed, pioneer gender scholars held that in the initial search for grand theories, many writings contributed not only to the invisibility of women but also to the presentation of sexist views on women and men (Mackinnon, 1979). Of late, many writers in the field would agree that by documenting gender phenomena, new insights can be developed, as alternatives to previous studies which, under the rubric of 'man' (or men) attempted to describe the experiences of both men and women (Reinharz, 1992).

Given that the purpose of my thesis is to uncover and explore gender dynamics in-depth, the use of a case study turned out to be useful in documenting the intricate connections between export manufacturing and the lives of women locally. As I moved back and forth from theory to data I recognised the strength of case studies as providers of detail and specificity. By choosing a case study I was able to closely observe and bring to the surface various issues manifested along the life course of low-income respondents in Juárez. This said, the elaboration of this case study also made me aware of the many case studies that have yet to be written in Juárez.

Methodology

Feminist methodologies have increasingly accepted the use of 'multi-source' research methods (Glucksmann, 1994:158). The use of multiple methods has earned its own name -triangulation- which spans the research spectrum, including interviews, participant observation and surveys, among others (Eckert, 1988: 241-55, Fonow and Cook, 1991). Although there are numerous possible combinations, scholars have stressed the importance of being responsive to the subjects studied and to the circumstances under which research is carried out (Reinharz, 1992:208). Thus, while giving greater relevance to women's views, this thesis has drawn on quantitative and qualitative analysis, aided by participant observation and secondary sources. At the analytical level, just as Maynard (1994:21-23) predicted, I found research that starts with quantitative data but then elaborates on observational in-depth interview material, a powerful tool for my understanding of a local phenomenon. The initial idea was to conduct a study which would allow me to understand women in their contexts (see Lawless, 1991). "Immersion in the setting", I found a useful strategy "to attempt to view the culture from within" (Wolf, 1996:10). Indeed, living in a low-income settlement

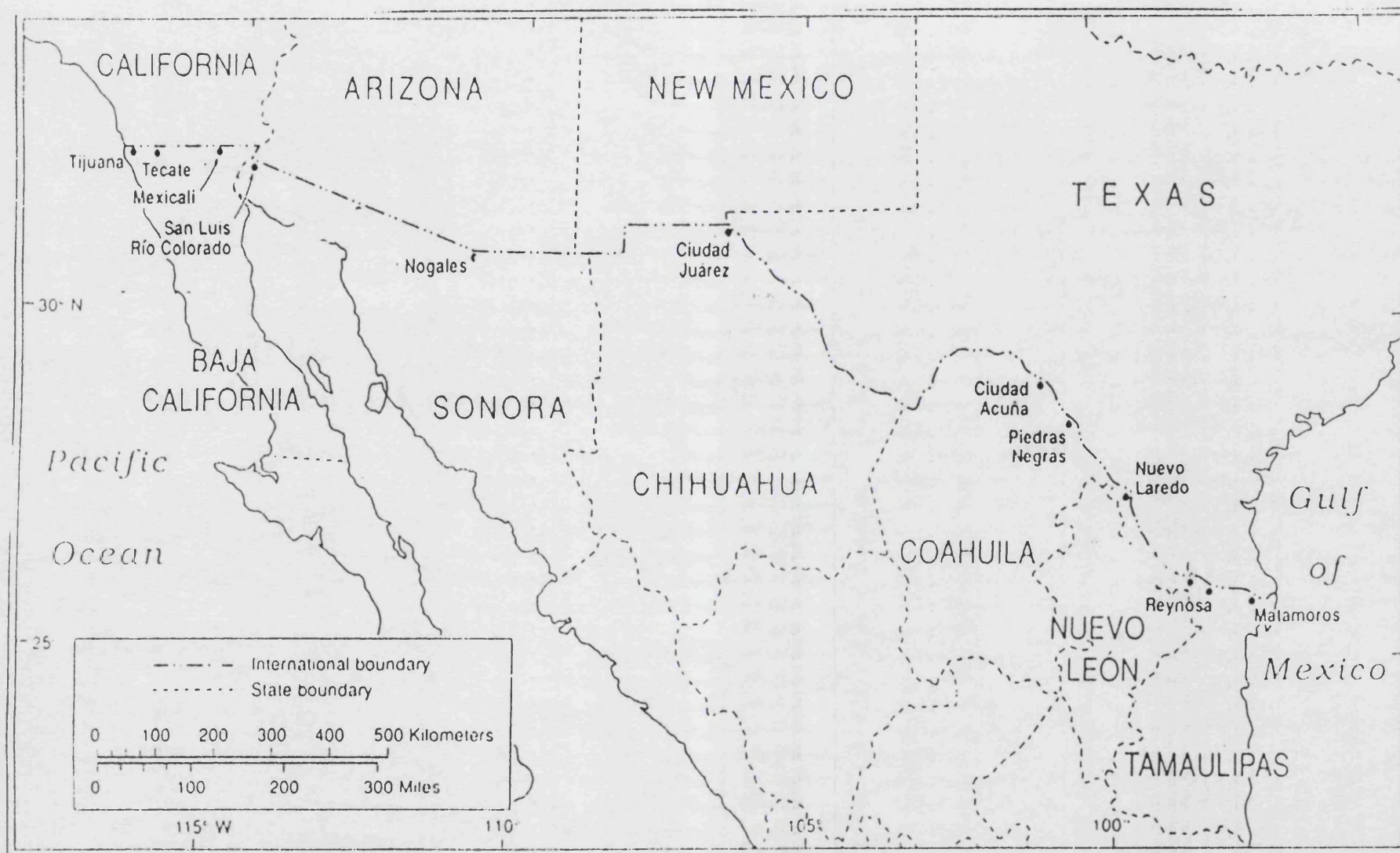
certainly proved very illuminating and also paved the way for conducting a small household survey locally. At an analytical level, the small survey permitted me the opportunity to understand variations within and among my respondents (Reinharz, 1992:245). As friendships with locals developed, participant observation aided my understanding of the dynamics of the low-income households I gained access to. Finally, semi-structured interviews, coupled with life and work histories, enabled me to hear local women's experiences and to understand some of their worries, anxieties and satisfactions, as daughters, wives and mothers in the context of a changing Mexican society.

The Site: Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua

Ciudad Juárez is an industrial city located on the northern frontier of Mexico, across the border from El Paso, Texas (USA) in the northern Mexican state of Chihuahua (see Map 2.1). Placed in the middle of an arid desert and with a north-south growth, Juárez, far from being geographically uniform, is overshadowed to the west by an unusual mountainous range (Sierra Mojada) (SEP, 1988:161). Thus, Sierra Mojada breaks not only the city's even surface, a sandy desert with temperatures reaching up to 43 Celsius in the summer, but also the strong seasonal winds characteristic of this region (Nolasco, et al., 1992:130). Contrasting this scene is a river, the Rio Bravo (or Rio Grande as it is called in the USA), which runs through the desert, delineating the boundary between Ciudad Juárez and the neighbouring US city of El Paso.

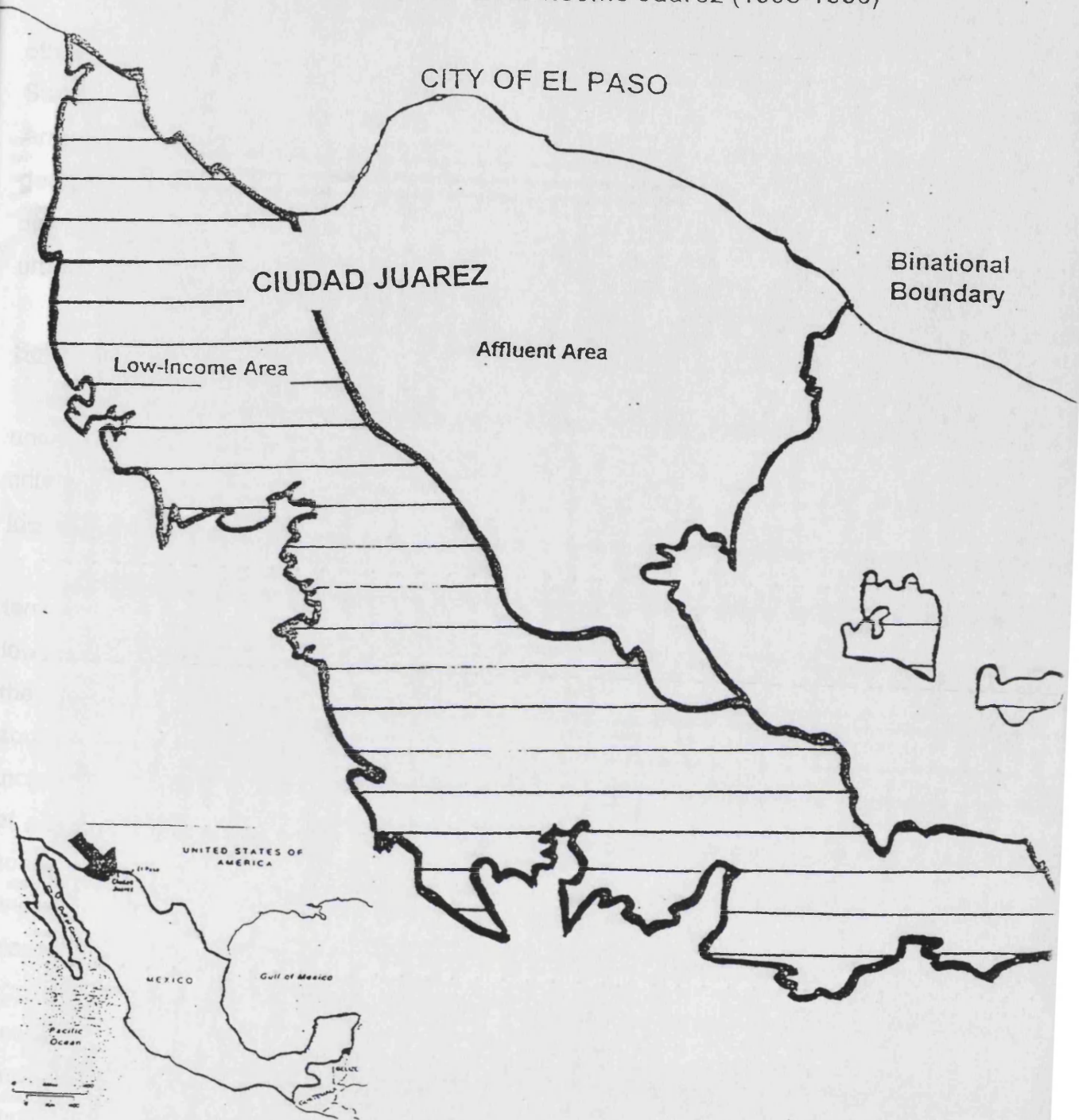
Broad estimates of population reveal that by 1994 Juárez had slightly less than a million inhabitants (Vila, 1994a:52) and population projections for the year 2000 range from 1.3 million to 2.4 million inhabitants (see Arreola and Curtis, 1993:40). Like other urban centres in Latin America, the site geographically divides low-income Mexicans from the local affluent population (Herzog, 1990:76). Thus, Juárez' wealthy areas, located in the north-eastern parts of the city, project an image of modernity resembling any city in the southern parts of the United States. Whilst shopping malls, an expanding banking system, motorways and wealthy 'condominiums' surround elite neighbourhoods that occupy less than one third of the city, the larger areas in the north east, centre and southeast side are akin to many parts of the 'under-privileged' developing world. In these, settlements in the form of shanty towns and squatter communities dominate the utilization of peripheral space (Herzog, 1990:77) (see Map 2.2). Juárez, just like many

Map 2.1 Juárez and Main Maquila Cities along the Northern Mexican Border



Source: Arreola and Curtis (1993:4).

Map 2.2 Low-Income Juárez (1995-1996)



Source: ICSA, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (Architect J. Chávez)

other Mexican cities located in the vicinity of the binational boundary with the United States, has been claimed to be a 'deviant case' (Portes and Walton, 1976:163 cited in Arreola and Curtis, 1993:64). Reasons for this include not only their particular geographical location (in the vicinity ^{of} to the United States) and their specialized tourist districts but, most importantly, the heavy presence of industrial zones within the cities' urban core (Arreola and Curtis, 1993:65 and 67).

Selection of Settlements

The process of selection of settlements where the research was carried out underwent three stages: first, identification; second, exploration; and, finally, sample criteria.

Identification

Casual observations in the poor areas of Juárez, what Heyman (1991:203) has termed "the Mexican border working class", revealed a variety of contexts in which the low-income populations of Juárez lived. Heterogeneous scenes from north Juárez to the poor southern parts of the city showed a mosaic of shacks and dwellings. Whilst some houses in these areas were constructed of the most primitive of materials, including cardboard, scrap wood and corrugated metal, (so-called 'self-help housing,' or asentamientos irregulares for which see Gilbert, 1996:104; Herzog, 1990:77-78)⁵, some other areas with poor or no public services had colourful houses built of cement and brick. Finally, some low-income areas with access to public services such as water, electricity and road pavements, whilst still considered by housing authorities as vivienda popular (low-income housing), had homogeneous housing patterns, nearly of the 'residential' type distinct elsewhere in the poor areas of the city.⁶ Indeed, just as Gilbert and Ward (1985:5-6) predicted, housing in Juárez can be seen as divided into formal and informal sector housing.⁷

Aware of the heterogeneity of the low-income border population, I started a series of visits to the housing and planning bodies locally (Ayuntamiento de Juárez⁸) so as to better understand the local impoverished urban areas. Given that census data on low-income areas were not available at the time of the study⁹, I then visited local academic institutions. Local scholars (urban planners) corroborated the lack of available statistical data on poor populations in Juárez and the reasons provided by a local

architect, Javier Chávez, included not only the lack of resources to undertake a local census of such type but the difficulty of 'keeping up' with the impressive growth of poverty-stricken settlements.¹⁰ Moreover, architect Chávez maintained that people's mobility across low-income settlements was another factor that made it difficult to predict approximate population figures for the local poor. Many settlers, he added, may re-accommodate to low-income areas where public services are available or where living is seen as more convenient to them for any reason, for example proximity to employment, to next of kin, or allocation of vivienda popular del estado or state housing) (see Arreola and Curtis, 1993:156). Having said that, local scholars' guidelines based on draft versions of a series of maps on poor Juárez proved of invaluable help. As drafts of maps available showed most settlements labelled by age and income, they provided the basis for the following geographic classification of the low-income areas of the city:

Region 1: Old Juárez or foundational settlements located northwest, built before 1968

Region 2: Settlements located central-west or built during the Seventies.

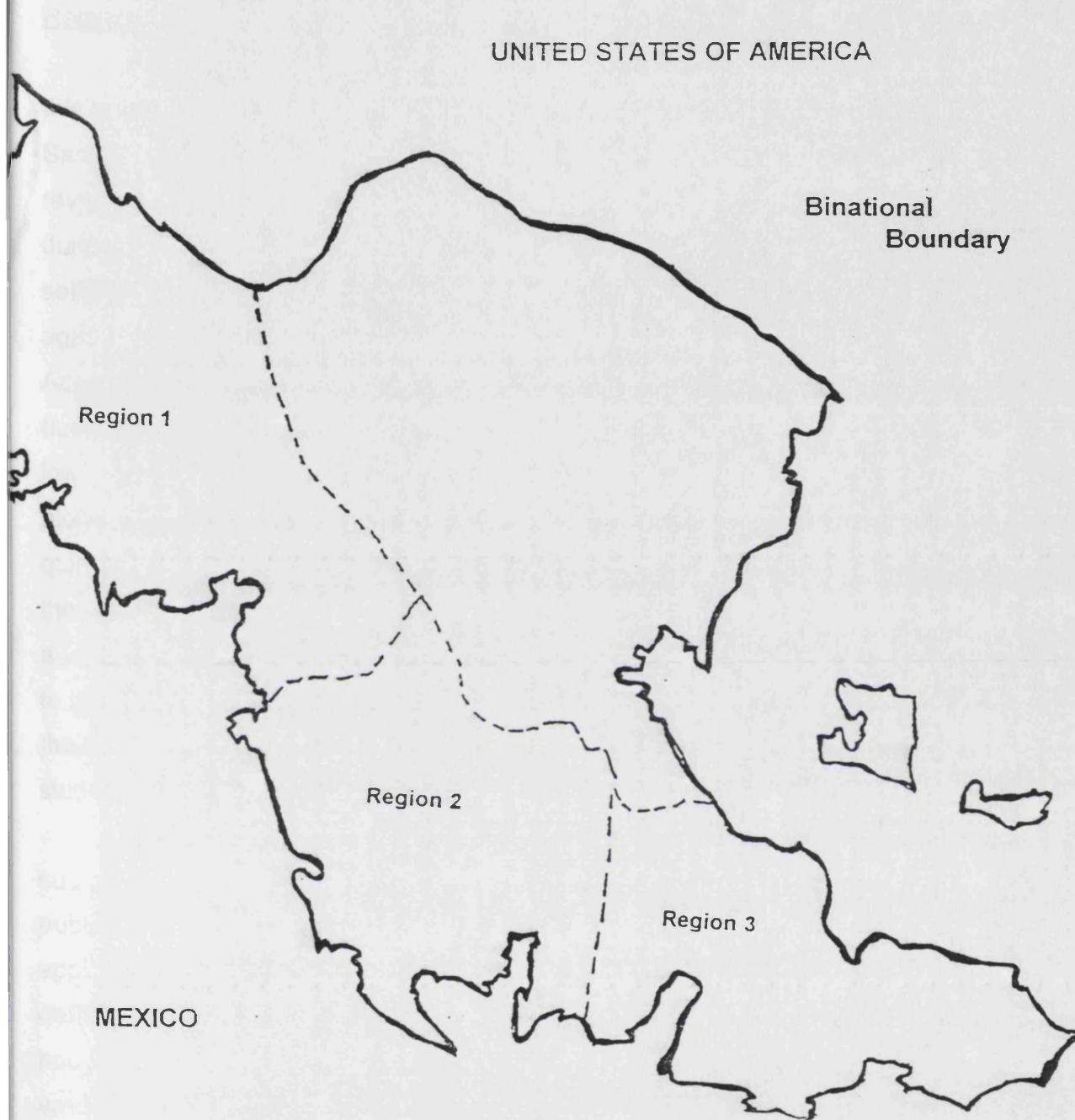
Region 3: Settlements located south and southeast (including low-income private- and state-housing) or built in the Eighties and Nineties (see Map 2.3).

The relevance of this classification to the research stems from its connection with the maquila industry locally, the main focus of the study. Thus, region 1 or old Juárez encompasses first built settlements in the city. That is, the area was built before maquila industries arrived in the city. Region 2 was built in the decade when assembly industries were set up locally; and region 3 built during a time when maquilas showed dramatic growth in the city. It then became clear not only that the sample for the study should include respondents living in the three identified low-income regions of Juárez but, given the variety of contexts seen in low-income settlements, the study should briefly register the living conditions and characteristics of the settlements where the respondents lived.

Exploration

In order to explore the three identified areas I decided to initially target (female) pioneer settlers from the three identified regions, whom I asked about their settlements, general conditions and settlements' relation to maquilas locally. Their accounts provide the basis for the description that follows.

Map 2.3 Identified Regions in Low-Income Juárez (1995-1996)



Source: ICSA, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (Architect J. Chávez)

Region 1: Northern Low-Income Settlements

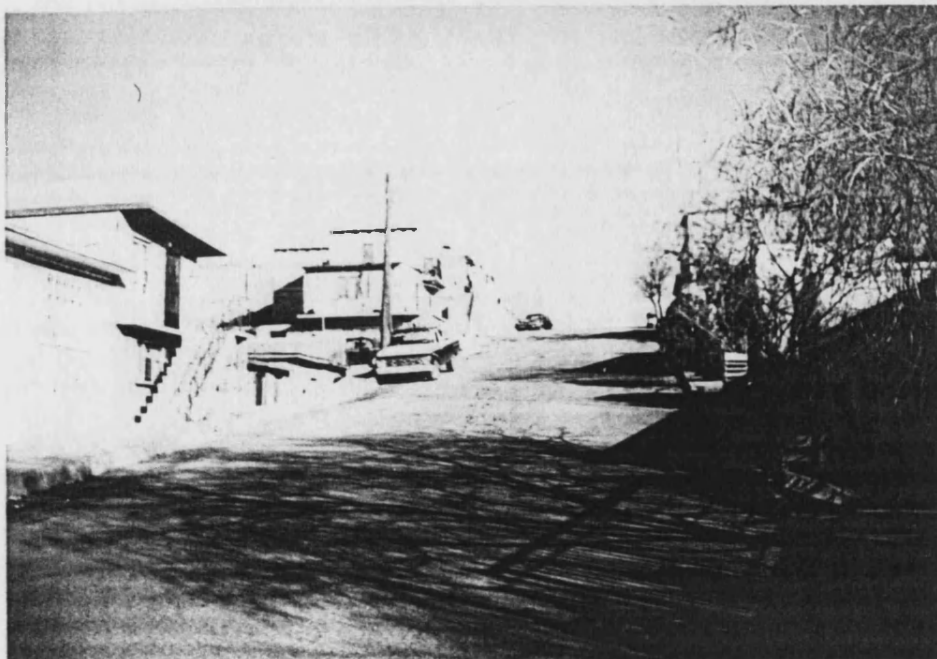
Spread on a hilly arid surface, colonias populares (low-income settlements) in this region lie on the border with the United States, delineated by the borderline of the Santa Fe bridge and the river (Rio Bravo). Conversations with older pioneer settlers revealed that some of these settlements, the ²eldest colonias in Juárez, were founded during the 1940s and even before (see also Loera de la Rosa, 1994:17). Newly-arrived settlers of that time, respondents maintained, were mostly of rural origin, former agricultural workers, who moved with their families in search of jobs and housing. According to Maria Luisa Castor, a pioneer settler, newcomers then preferred the hill due both to its proximity to the only source of water, the Rio Bravo, and also the very low, nearly 'symbolic', prices of plots then. Whilst some settlers may have bought small plots of land from the municipality, others became 'illegal' squatters.¹¹ As dwellers quickly populated this steep surface, Socorro, another pioneer settler, maintained that the lack of public services and the polluted waters from the river made their residence a very hazardous experience. Although the local municipality supplied drinking water to the hill in the late Fifties and Sixties, settlers reported continuous delivery failures at the time of the interview.¹² These accounts are confirmed by Cesar Fuentes' (1992:4) study on Juárez urban morphology, Arreola and Curtis (1993:39) and Herzog (1990:71).

Casual observations of the northern parts of the city in the Nineties confirm the success of the first settlers in obtaining basic housing. Most parts of the area have public services, including pavements, electricity in central parks, and some houses appeared to be built of brick and cement. However, closer examination reveals great deficiencies (see Figure 2.1). Besides a continuous failure in the provision of water, poor delineation of roads and unreliable rubbish collection services have made alliances among inhabitants imperative. Notwithstanding this, low-income inhabitants' most pressing worry in the Nineties appeared to be the unprecedented situation of urban violence¹³ most clear in cholismo, a feature that emerged in Juárez towards the end of the Seventies which seemed heightened on the hill, causing great distress to locals.

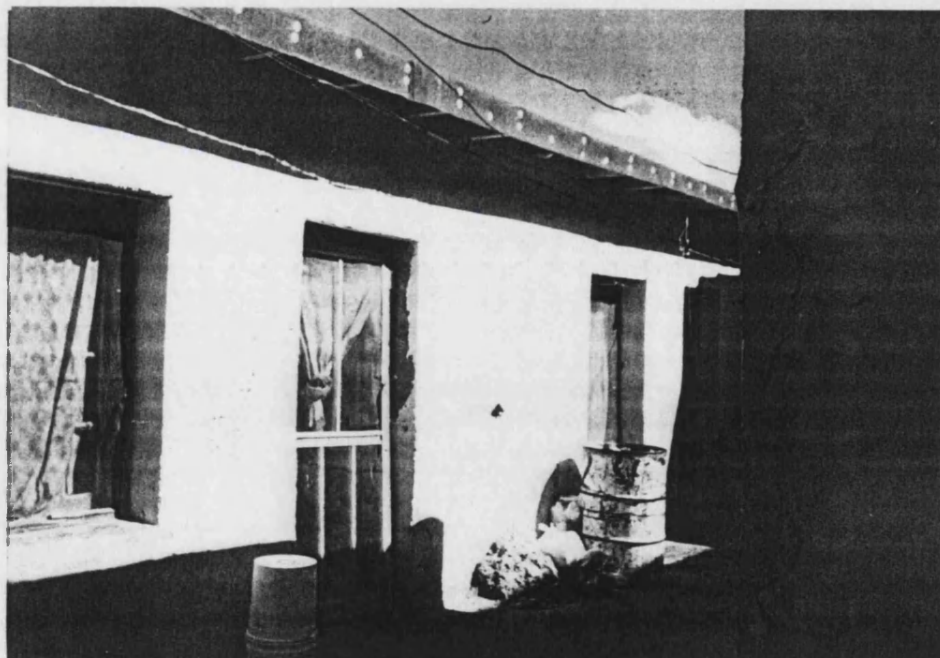
Cholismo

A contemporary feature of low-income urban areas of the northern Mexican border area, and Juárez in particular, is the rapid multiplication of cholos. The term

Figure 2.1 Region 1 - Old Juárez



**Settlement Name: Altavista
Location: Region 1
Author: C.Ladino
December 1995**



**Settlement Name: Chaveña
Location: Region 1
Author: C.Ladino
April 1996**

cholos locally denotes groups of low-income adolescents, mostly men, wearing distinctive outfits who are characterised by their rebellious and violent behaviour (Valenzuela Arce, 1988:55).¹⁴ This phenomenon, reported along the northern border since the Seventies and Eighties, has been explained as young low-income Mexicans' channel to express a commonly felt rejection by society (see also Barrera Bassols, 1979, cited in Valenzuela Arce, 1988:67). A relevant feature of cholos to the current research is the reported previous municipal attempts to include them as part of the maquila workforce (see Chapter Three).

Region 2: Central Settlements, CDP

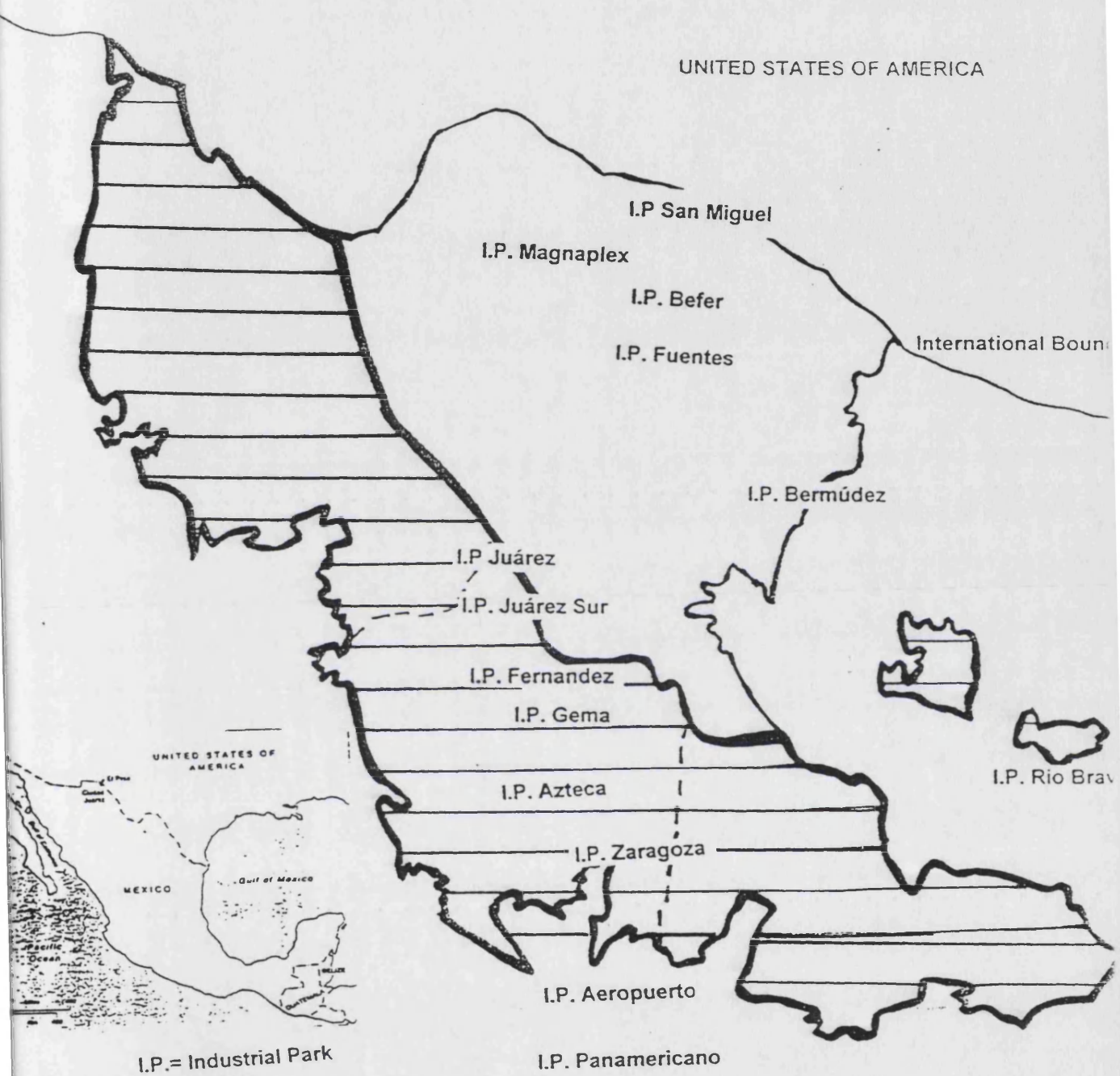
As the Seventies registered a situation of overpopulation in the northern parts of the city, squatters began to make their presence felt in the southern parts of the city (what later became central Juárez) (Loera de la Rosa, 1994). Settlers' anxiety over poor housing conditions on self-built houses in the arid desert prompted the formation of the left wing CDP organisation (Comité de Defensa Popular)¹⁵ or the Popular Defence Committee. The CDP in Juárez was to unite the interests of trade unionists, teachers, settlers and students. Most importantly, its main purpose was to organise and protect dwellers or 'illegal' squatters. It coordinated social riots if police raids attempted to expel settlers from their houses and in settlements where the granting of public services was not legally obtained, CDP leaders and settlers 'illegally' diverted main city water and electricity sources to CDP settlements, or 'fronts', as they are called locally (Lau Rojo, 1992:195).¹⁶ Squatting in CDP fronts, pioneer settlers held, was convenient for those in search of housing and employment. Not only were CDP fronts located in the vicinity of middle class residential housing (from which public services could be easily diverted into their settlements) but they were close to the newly arrived maquilas. Indeed, newly established maquilas began to set up industrial parks in the surrounding areas of low-income settlements which made CDP fronts appealing to job seekers. Not surprisingly, the Eighties and Nineties have seen CDP 'fronts' becoming a magnet for most low-income house seekers, mostly migrants, who unquestionably supported the social movement.¹⁷ My conversations with some first time settlers in CDP settlements revealed their initial political connection with the CDP movement as a result of their felt need for housing and public services. CDP fronts were still regarded at the time of the interview

(1995-1996), by low-income settlers as protected havens from the local federal police, and convenient for maquila workers who had little or no access to 'legal' housing locally. Indeed, whilst early maquilas located in areas close to the binational boundary, later maquilas moved to the peripheral areas of the city (Map 2.4). Groups of maquilas located in a specific area ensure not only convenience to its work force but industrial parks' access to public services. Most important, management have also ensured that maquilas are placed in locations with access to major motorways (Arreola and Curtis, 1993:205). More recent industrial parks have also been placed on the outskirts of the airport. Visits to various CDP settlements in the Nineties revealed scarce resources and insufficient municipal services. Piled rubbish on corners, streams of electricity wires on the make-shift streets¹⁸, houses made of cardboard boxes and iron sheets and open pipes carrying water combine to give CDP fronts a striking ambience of poverty (see Figure 2.2).¹⁹ Pioneer settlers interviewed in CDP fronts reported that while their initial pressing difficulties back in the Seventies and Eighties were the riots with the police, these had modified over time. More serious in the Nineties were the hazards caused by the poor provision of services and the continuous struggle to get legal documentation for the plots.²⁰ To further compound the difficulties, given that the police do not visit the settlements, most CDP fronts were reported to have considerable drugs trafficking.

Region 3: Settlements in the South, INFONAVITS

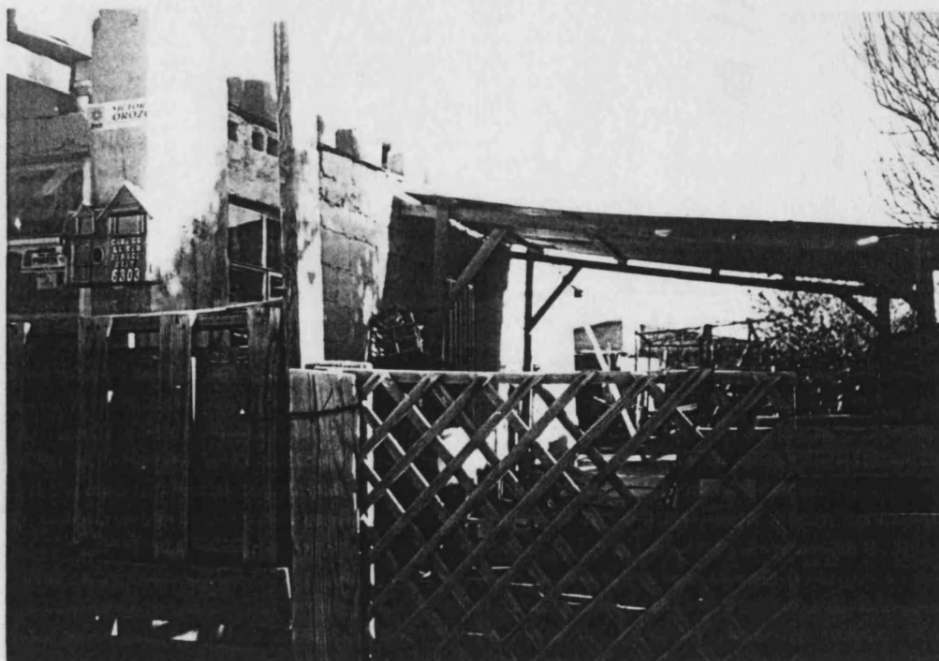
Studies conducted in Juárez during the Eighties showed the remarkable multiplication of settlements on the periphery of the city, so much so that nearly 60% of the Juárez population was reported to be living in the shanty towns at that time (Barrera Bassols and Venegas Aguilera, 1992:24). Not surprisingly, over 30 CDP fronts emerged during this period, most of them located in the central and southeastern areas of the city (Loera de la Rosa, 1994:19). It was around this time that housing authorities in central Mexico, in response to the national problem of poor housing and in seeking to favour workers in the formal sector of the economy, created the INFONAVIT fund²¹ (Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores) or government sponsored housing which also made its presence felt in Juárez. As the national government attempted to support industrial development along the border as well as in the interior, the idea of assisting the industrial workforce with government sponsored housing

Map 2.4 Industrial Parks in Juárez, 1995-1996



Source: ICSA, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (Architect J. Chávez)

Figure 2.2 Region 2 - CDP Settlements



**Settlement Name: Nuevo Hipódromo
Location: Region 2
Author: C.Ladino
March, 1996**



**Settlement Name: Nuevo Hipódromo
Location: Region 2
Author: C.Ladino
April, 1996**

seemed quite appealing (Arreola and Curtis, 1993:155). Local border authorities however appeared unable to direct development in the ways initially proposed by the federal government due to their consistent lack of resources and possibly poor administration (Romero and Suárez, 1995:80).²²

In Juárez, in particular, as the construction of the first industrial park 'Parque Industrial Antonio Bermúdez' in 1969 accelerated the growth of middle class fraccionamientos²³ or residential housing²⁴ in the area (with full provision of public services) discomfort among low-income settlers during the Seventies was evident. Thus, the INFONAVIT program's attempt to meet the housing needs of low-skilled maquila workers, who constituted the greatest bulk of formal sector workers locally (see Chapter Three), was greatly welcomed.

Housing authorities then allocated southern parts of the city for maquila housing purposes. Whilst the Eighties saw other residential arrangements (INDECO which attempted to cover the needs for unaffiliated workers and FOVISSTE which attempted to accommodate public sector workers, see Herzog, 1990:240), these were not of the same initial scale as INFONAVIT (or maquilas-centred housing) attempted to be (Brachet de Marquez, 1994:138).²⁵ These agencies established throughout the Seventies and Eighties in the city were financed by a 5% tax paid by employers from wages paid (Arreola and Curtis, 1993:155). Workers earning an amount not exceeding three minimum salaries in a month could apply for INFONAVIT housing credits (Herrera Beltrán, 1991:130).

At the time of the research the INFONAVIT operated as a financing agency. Although the institution started as a fully government sponsored housing service directly dependent on the Mexican Social Security Service (IMSS) (Garza and Schteingart, 1978: 147), it later became a privately funded institution (Brachet de Marquez, 1994). As Herrera Beltrán (1991:132) puts it: "it became a public organisation characteristic of decentralised forms of government, operating independently but with the participation of the federal government, capital and labour." ²⁶

An important point to highlight is the reported delays in allocating the houses to workers and also the difficulties candidates face in the selection process (Herrera Beltrán, 1991:136).²⁷ Moreover, housing estates according to local urban planners, whilst still expanding at the time of the research, had failed to adequately meet the

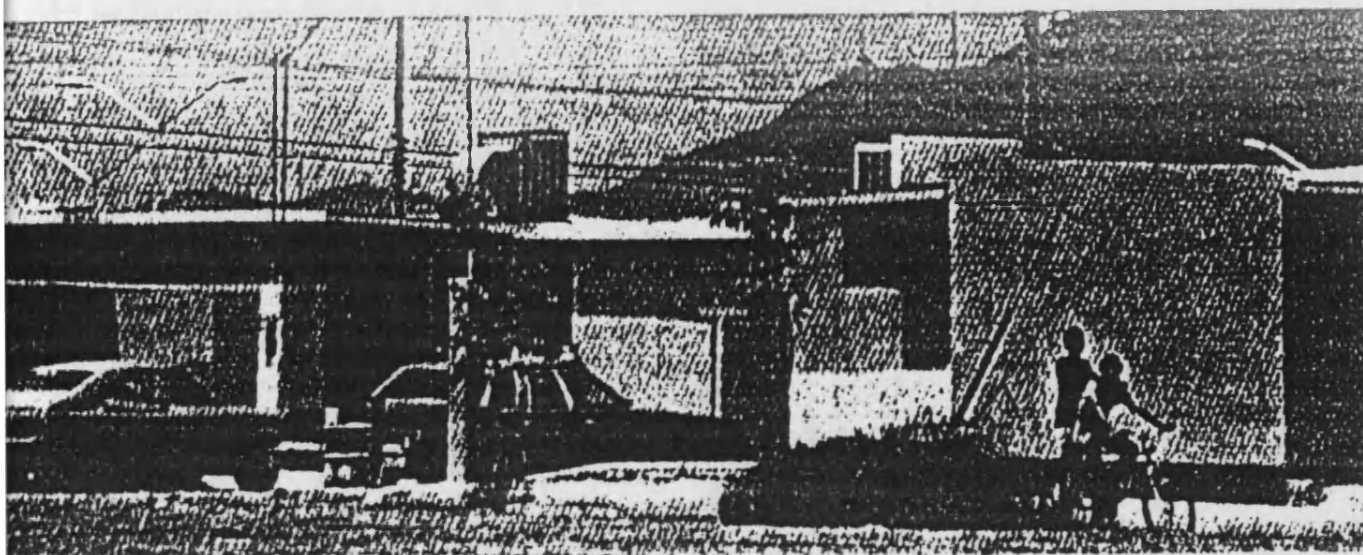
housing needs of local industrial workers.²⁸ This may have prompted successive municipal administrations to encourage privately-funded housing projects for low-income inhabitants (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:18).

My visits to INFONAVITS estates in the city confirmed local inhabitants' access to services in these areas. The efficient allocation of public services, police patrols, street lighting, rubbish collection and the upkeep of pavements in maquila residential areas were reported by the first newcomers interviewed as being better than in any other low-income areas in Juárez (see Figure 2.3; see also Arreola and Curtis, 1993:180; Staudt, 1986:102). Moreover, the Nineties have seen new industrial parks being located in the surroundings of INFONAVITS (which are also close to the local airport, located central and south of the city) for the convenience of its personnel.

Sample Criteria

Having explored and identified the three regions in Juárez, the criteria used to select the settlements in which to conduct the study included settlements' age (mostly with respect to maquilas' arrival in Juárez), income (low-income areas) and geographical location (north, central or southeast low-income areas in the city). The strategy of covering geographically and historically the Juarenses distinctive periphery was to enable further understanding of the dynamics of the settlements before, during and after the maquila strategy was introduced locally. Once the pilot survey was completed (10 questionnaires) and the questionnaire modified²⁹, the initial aim was to approach 40 households in each region (120 households in total) using the strategy of knocking on the door of every other household. However, given that knocking on every other household did not always prove to be successful, various strategies were employed. Beyond the occasional contacts made at bus stops and in the local demonstration against violence against women, knocking on every other household and contact with pioneer settlers, snowballing and, contacts with key residents were the main strategies used in the three regions. In the northern areas, lack of response in many households prompted the use of snow-balling and contact with key local residents. Thus, pioneer settlers' friends and acquaintances made up the first group interviewed. This strategy, combined with knocking on neighbouring household doors plus frequent visits to the local dentist's friends and clients, formed a second group of

Figure 2.3 Region 3 - INFONAVITS



Taken from: IVEC (Instituto de la Vivienda del Estado de Chihuahua) (1995) *La Vivienda Popular en Chihuahua*, January Edition, IVEC, Juárez, Chihuahua, p 126.



Unidad habitacional del Infonavit.

Taken from: Norte de Ciudad Juárez, 22 April, 1996 p 3A

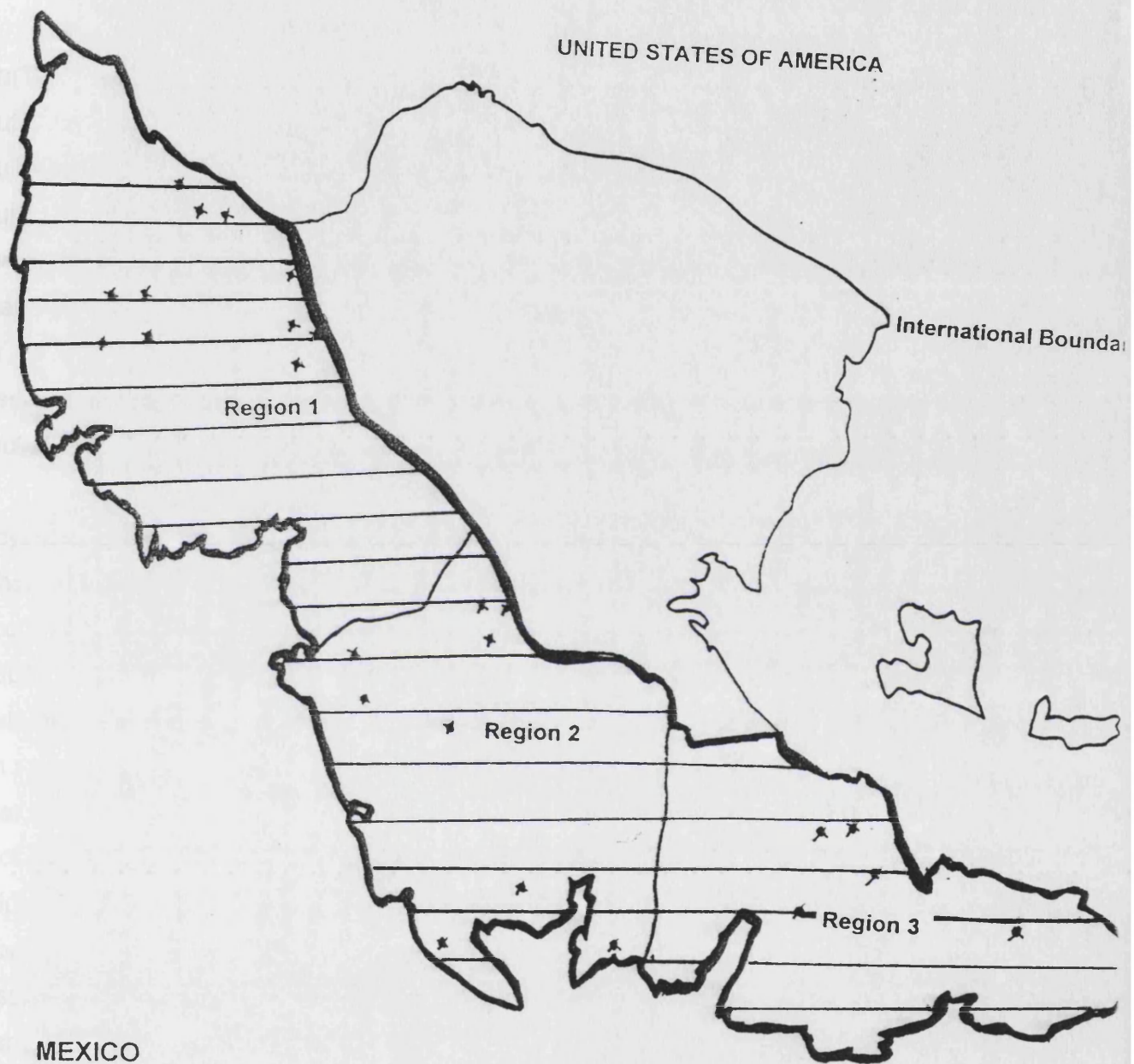
women interviewed in region 1. Finally, a cab driver who took me to the airport on one occasion, also introduced me to his wife, a maquila worker and her neighbouring friends. In CDP settlements, a social worker introduced me to a former CDP leader who invited me to a CDP meeting.³⁰ After the meeting some settlers were very welcoming and introduced me to their 'comrades' in other settlements or fronts. Once the snow-balling chain expired I again started the process of targeting first time settlers in the area. Similarly, in the southern settlements (including INFONAVITS) I started with pioneers and moved on to their friends, acquaintances and neighbours. Once this technique expired I knocked on every other household and contacted key residents such as the owner of the corner shop and the local medical practitioner. Following the above-mentioned selection criteria, 25 low-income settlements in the city or colonias populares (from regions 1, 2 and 3) provided the setting for the study (see Map 2.5).³¹ The use of multiple methods proved useful in my research as it allowed me to contact maquila and non-maquila workers from various 'industrial' generations, main focus of the study.

Women in Juárez: The Respondents

82 responses were derived from the 120 households that were approached in the low-income settlements.³² This survey was complemented by a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews in the settlements (38) (see List of Settlements visited in Annexes p.251). While all women in the sample (82) were asked whether they would collaborate with the life and work histories, constraints of time and access to the information (see below) allowed me to carry out only 33 life histories.³³

Most of the women whose life and work histories were constructed were interviewed in their households and, in most instances, alone.³⁴ During the interviews there was generally no male presence (the preference of both interviewer and interviewees). At times, children and the interviewees' mothers took part in both the questionnaire and the subsequent life and work-histories. Women who agreed to participate in the in-depth interviewing process were visited many times. The place of interview varied according to the respondents' preference: in their homes or, if more privacy was required, a friend's house or even a cafe in the central part of Juárez. Some even suggested going shopping while 'talking' so that the interviewing would be more

Map 2.5 Settlements' Location within Regions (Juárez, 1995-1996)



Source: ICSA, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (Architect J. Chávez)

private. The structure of the interviews was flexible. However, the focus was always on the impact of industrial employment upon women's lives and the households to which they belonged.

Concerning limitations, for the respondents there were time constraints. This was not only because, on the whole, they tended to arrive home very tired if they had outside employment, but also because they bore the double burden of working both outside and inside the home. That is, upon arrival home, most of them undertook the bulk of domestic work. Understandably, while some women were keen to contribute to the research, they felt they could not give me more than a limited amount of time. There was also the problem of interviewing women on their own as often, husbands, brothers or other male kin also wanted to participate. On occasions when this happened I decided to stop the interviews. If not, men tended to take over and the woman would remain silent. Consequently, the process of collecting data was at times delayed.

Another limitation was that some women found the questioning intrusive. Before any interview started, however, I would always explain the nature of the study, and ask whether they were willing to cooperate. Nevertheless, even when they agreed, at times, I could feel their discomfort in their reactions and answers. This was often the case with housewives, both older and younger women, in particular if they had never worked outside the home. Many older women made explicit that they viewed the interviews as an intrusion into their lives. Whilst I had sympathy with this attitude, it was interesting that employed women, in particular maquila workers, did not react in the same way. In fact, one maquila woman, when I thanked her for collaborating with me, said she did not mind as she usually talked about the same things with her friends and colleagues at work. Conversely, some full time housewives insisted they had not talked about these issues to anybody before. Similarly, some younger women, when asked about their partners, felt I was provoking 'betrayal' of their intimacy and their partners. In addition, 2 housewives, asked me to visit them again but without any questionnaires or 'books to write'. It was only later that I realised that they wanted the companionship of a friend but not the intrusion of a researcher.

Many times, though, I felt the barriers disappear and there was a quick, easy rapport. As a result, many women shared hours of conversation with me. As the respondents' mothers were present on various occasions (in 6 households³⁵), I had the

opportunity to set up semi-structured interviews with mothers and daughters at the same time. This gave me the opportunity to study inter-generational variations.

The main issues, recorded and written after the interviews, were explored further through the collection of secondary data. Dance-halls - many maquila workers' favourite entertainment places- were visited, and some dance hall administrators interviewed. On the other hand, interviews with local priests also provided insights into employment, urban violence and local household dynamics. Local NGOs were sources of valuable information on issues identified during interviews as problems faced by low-income households. A number of maquila women activists and ex-activists were also interviewed and their insights were mostly helpful. Although this research was centred primarily on households with maquila workers, some low-income women activists from different popular movements and struggles were also included. Material was also collected from government officials, housing and planning bodies and local universities. Finally, interviews with various academics in Mexico from research centres visited and in the United States provided me with valuable information (see Annexes, p.246).

The Researcher: A Personal Account

Given that not only do the theoretical framework and data collection shape the results here presented, in this section I will devote some time to the issue of reflexivity, that is how my own positioning as a Colombian woman doing research in northern Mexico facilitated (or not) access to the information.

Feminist considerations of the issue of reflexivity¹³⁶ have highlighted the importance of documenting the position of researchers while doing fieldwork (Bell, 1993a:29). More specifically, when addressing the issue of women in the Third World, scholars and writers have problematised not only the representation of Third World women but also the entire fieldwork. The issues that have roused interest include not only why research is conducted, but also how it is done (Wolf, 1996: xi). Undoubtedly, a power dimension has been recognised as central to dilemmas on fieldwork in the Third World (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 1994:146; Maynard and Purvis, 1994:5). It is striking, however, that many writings on fieldwork and relations of power between researcher and respondents presuppose a white Western researcher. Thus, the issue of 'other versus self' is usually put in terms of Western-Non Western. This point, whilst

seemingly clear, caught my attention as I realised the complex situation resulting from my status as a Colombian doing research in northern Mexico. As a non-Mexican, I sympathise with Tong (1994) when she states that outsiders can have the opportunity to take a fresh look at the unknown. Not having visited northern Mexico previously certainly gave me an opportunity to attempt, as Tong (1994:235) states: "to see and feel what other [local] people do not see and feel." Likewise, as a Latin American, on countless occasions, I felt I was an insider. I felt I shared many of the same values, the same language and, looking Latin made me feel at times I was simply another local woman in the city. Whilst I still find problematic the categorisation of Western-non Western for a researcher partly educated in the West but from a non-Western origin, in retrospect, I consider my complex insider/outsider position contributed greatly to my understanding of the local socio-cultural phenomena (Lett, 1990: 139).

This section aims to describe my personal experiences in the northern Mexican border area. It will start by providing some background information and will then look at the multiple aspects embedded in my relationship with locals in Juárez.

Recent literature on fieldwork experiences have highlighted the multi-dimensional aspects of the relationships that emerge and develop between respondents and the researcher and the constantly changing aspects of such relationships (Rabinow, 1977). As Phoenix maintains: "[undoubtedly] the power between interviewers and interviewees shifts over the course of the study" (1994:55). Several authors have, however, pointed out that the role they adopted in the field was not necessarily one chosen by themselves, but decided by their subjects (Caplan, 1993:21). My fieldwork experiences and my relationship with respondents proved to be all but predictable or even static or mono-dimensional. I felt rejection at first from locals to my presence in northern Mexico but, in some instances, this was later translated into friendships and political alliances, what Powdermaker has termed a move from detached to engaged (see Powdermaker, 1966 cited in Bell, 1993b:4). Moreover, as my accounts will next show, my positioning as a Colombian researcher was not only complex at the respondents' level but also at the local academic level.

The fieldwork for this study was carried out between November 1995 and June 1996, after a year of preparing the literature review and methodological tools. I left London in November 1995 for Mexico City where I was to stay for a week collecting

written material on the topic. When I initially arrived in Mexico City, the first impression I had was a great sense of familiarity. This was not only because Mexicans also speak Spanish, but because I had previously contacted from London members of the Colombian community in Mexico with whom I stayed for 5 days. In Juárez, as I did not know anybody, I had the opportunity to live in a house with a 70-year old low-income woman, Carmelita, whose main activity was commerce (door-to-door jewellery vendor) and her 10-year old adopted daughter.³⁷ Even though I paid rent weekly, Carmelita asked me and expected me to clean the place daily. Moreover, this concern extended to her ideas about my personal cleanliness. She would refer to people from 'there' (the South) (esa gente de po'allá) as 'dirty' and was quite surprised that I washed daily. Her attitudes, however, turned out to be indicative of local people's perceptions of Colombians.³⁸ Indeed, some respondents distrusted me so much that it seriously interfered with my interviews. Not trusting my status as a researcher³⁹, and upon hearing my accent and discovering I was not a local, they would make excuses and decline to be interviewed. Some even felt they had to interview me first on the street before allowing me into their houses. Their questions would range from whether I had finished primary school to whether I was engaged in any drugs trafficking locally. On one occasion, after completing the questionnaire and interview, my informant asked me to help her do the washing up.⁴⁰

Lack of power, dependence and poor treatment by informants have been reported in the literature as part of many researchers' experiences of fieldwork (see e.g. Phoenix, 1994). A clear example is the accounts given by Daphne Patai (1988) in Brazil. In her paper 'Who is Calling Whom Subaltern' she described not only her false beliefs of a shared commonality with her research subjects prior to embarking on field research with low-income women in Brazil, but also how racial differences obstructed her bonding with locals. Moreover, there is also evidence of cases where female researchers while in the field have had to conform to local gender roles and behaviour which included housework activities and particular types of clothing (see Berik, 1996; Dube, 1975 cited in Bell, 1993b:9; Kumar, 1992). Nonetheless, challenging relationships at the level of micro-processes of interpersonal dynamics, Diane Wolf considers, may create more sensitive researchers and possibly give material for exploring un- or under-reported phenomena (Wolf, 1996:10). More important to bear

in mind is the privileged position field workers have, as they can leave the site at any time (*Ibid.*).

Although it is true that transgressing the local codes “may not [necessarily] lead to acceptance by subjects” (Caplan, 1993:22), in some cases the uneven relationship between informants and researcher may have beneficial results for both. My efforts to bond-in with locals whilst not successful at first, later turned into a successful identification and later friendships. An unprecedented situation of urban violence which affected the lives of many low-income settlers, in particular women, brought me closer to many women in Juárez. Fear of walking alone in the settlements, a commonly felt anxiety for women (including me), led to my brief encounters with them. In seeking companionship when walking to bus stops, especially at night, I came to meet local women settlers, many of whom later became respondents. As the issue of urban violence against women in the settlements reached disproportionate dimensions⁴¹, the idea of the women organising a march to protest against the municipality’s indifference to their plight, strengthened alliances. As I agreed to actively participate with their plea for justice in a public demonstration against violence against women, commonalities became enhanced and later friendships emerged.

As my fieldwork developed I realised that not only were shared worries and anxieties a point of identification with local women settlers but also that some local low-income women’s overly manifested concern about me as a Colombian in Juárez brought me close to their lives and families. I realised that some low-income women in the settlements, upon knowing I was Colombian, felt extremely overprotective of me. Two women in particular, Guadalupe and Lupita felt I was in a very vulnerable position. Convinced that I could be the target of police harassment locally if my status as a Colombian visitor was overly manifested, Lupita decided to correct my Spanish so that I would not sound foreign and Guadalupe worked very hard on my appearance so I would not look foreign.⁴² These women shared many stories and anxieties which I found of enormous value to the research.

Finally, as friendships developed and once the barriers disappeared, some women did not see me as a threat and talked openly. Carmelita, my landlady was no exception as over time she revealed to me her private religious affiliation and practices.⁴³ More importantly, some maquila workers were also very welcoming and

invited me to spend week-ends in their households together with their families.⁴⁴

Reported fieldwork experiences and ethnographic accounts may certainly highlight a part of the fieldwork which may be overwhelmingly positive or negative with respect to a researcher's positioning and her detachment and/or engagement, her identification or alienation from the local context in which the research is produced. I would highlight, however, the importance of understanding the researcher's experiences of fieldwork as a multi-dimensional process of discovery affected by a complex interlocking of the many outsider and/or insider situations throughout the overall period of fieldwork. Reflexive analysis uncovers these dynamics which should be a matter of careful attention when interpreting and reporting findings. A final layer to add to this multi-dimensional analysis on positioning includes the researcher's relation to the local academic environment. My presence in Juárez, for local scholars who became aware of the academic purpose of my visit, was by no means mono-dimensional or static. It was only over time that it became clear to me that my visit in Juárez was seen as an extension of the innumerable visits of other outside researchers. Indeed, the issue of poverty in northern Mexico has become of such great popularity in the academic world that the typical Juárez low-income household is laughingly said to be composed by the mother, the father, the children and the visiting researcher! As such, competitiveness and territoriality among local academics in the area have made access to recent scholarly work done locally, a rather social and political event (see Peña, 1997:ix).⁴⁵

The multi-dimensional aspects of fieldwork experiences make issues of difference and similarity between researchers and respondents a complex endeavour. Nonetheless, I would highlight the importance of "search[ing] for similarities as the basis for constructing mutuality and understanding" (Macintyre 1993:46). Having said that, the contested arenas of power and vulnerability among researchers and respondents appear to expand and contract to include so much and so little that it is not hard to believe that the conceptual utility of insider/outsider analyses may, at times, seem to be totally lost.

Figure 2.4 Self-Built Housing in Juárez



Settlement Name: Colonia Anapra
Author: C.Ladino
April, 1996

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Harding (1991) argues that whereas 'methods' refers to techniques for gathering research material and 'methodology' provides both theory and analysis of the research process, 'epistemology', or the theory of knowledge, is a branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, its presuppositions and basis and the general reliability of claims.

2. Others may also suggest the need for gender studies which focus on men and masculinity from the viewpoint of men (see Stanley and Wise, 1993). This, however, goes beyond the scope of the current research.

3. The following workable definition for case study is provided by a Modern Sociology Dictionary (1969:38): "a method of studying social phenomena through the thorough analysis of an individual case. The case may be a person, a group, an episode, a process, a community, a society, or any other unit of social life.... [Case studies] provide an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details that are often overlooked (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969).

4. Other criticisms mentioned in her book include, that case studies are inconducive to theory testing; and that the paucity of case studies hampers our ability to engage in cross-cultural or comparative studies (Reinharz, 1992).

5. Diversity also abounds within the category of irregular settlements or self-built housing. Herzog (1990:78-9) for instance reviewed various categories previously identified by several authors in the field. Those include the categories identified by Portes and Walton (1976) which encompasses: first, spontaneous settlements, formed illegally on unoccupied land and then subjected to gradual slow growth; second, land invasions where groups of settlers establish themselves as a group (including large families); third, clandestine sub-divisions, established by landowners who sell plots of land at low prices. Herzog also mentions Cornelius' (1975) classification of peripheral settlements in Mexico City which differentiates between squatter settlements and low-income settlements created legally by private land companies or individuals. Finally, the works of Gilbert and Ward (1985) are also mentioned and their categories include illegal sub-divisions, ejido subdivisions and invasions. In my opinion, Juárez's CDP settlements would most likely fall into the squatter settlements division identified by Cornelius and within this branch, squatting is most closely of the type 'invasions' or 'land invasions' as envisaged by Gilbert and Ward (1985) and by Portes and Walton (1976).

6. Based on the 1990 census, Schteingart and Solis' (1994) study revealed that 28% of Juárez' population had access to 'good' housing understood as housing with access to basic public services (water, electricity, pavement, drainage, etc) (1994:38).

7. Arreola and Curtis (1993:154 and 156) recalling Gilbert and Ward's (1985) define formal and informal housing. Formal housing they maintain refers to 'standard housing' usually privately -though occasional publically- financed and constructed. To build housing of this type "a party would arrange financing through a bank or mortgage company, purchase land, and hire the necessary professional builders." In addition, they hold that the size of the formal housing market will vary with the wealth of the community. Conversely informal sector housing or self-help housing is self-constructed,

and often on a public land.

8. More precisely, local housing and planning bodies visited included the Ayuntamiento de Juárez (Tesorería) where I spoke to the Engineer María Idali Mendoza Ruelas, Vice director. This place is found in : Edificio de la Dirección de Catastro. Ave Fransisco Villa y Malecón, C.P. 32000 Cd Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico Tel N. 14-66-67.

9. According to the engineer, María Idali Mendoza Ruelas, Vice-director of the housing and planning bodies in Juárez at the time of the survey, statistical information was in process and little could be done to provide me with recent estimates. I then visited local academic institutions and, more specifically, the department of architecture in ICSA (Sub-division of the local University, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez) where alternative avenues were provided for the selection of the settlements.

10. The low-income parts of the city of Juárez, once scarcely populated, are said to have solidified due to a double migration trend. Nolasco and her colleagues report that economic difficulties may have driven high numbers of regionally-based peasants towards Juárez since early in the century (Nolasco, *et al.*, 1990:28), so much so that by 1950 the northern border showed population growth rates double those reported for the whole of Mexico (*Ibid.*:40; see also Uquirdi, 1975). This said, rural migrants were not the only settlers expanding the poor areas of Juárez. Mexican urban settlers may have also increased migration figures during the Fifties and Sixties. It appeared that a combined effect of urban and rural migration may have accelerated the growth of Juárez' highly populated low-income peripheral neighbourhoods. Not only did massive repatriation of rural Mexican workers from the United States to their country of origin take place at the end of the Bracero Program (Sklaire, 1993:28), but urban migration from central states to the northern border increased and was a widely reported phenomenon (IVEC, 1995:24). Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, as economic difficulties and rampant unemployment intensified in the entire nation, many inhabitants from central and neighbouring Mexican states set off for the promising dynamic cities located on the Mexican-American frontera (SEP, 1988:167) (see Chapter Three this thesis).

11. It is maintained though that throughout the Sixties as land acquisition through the municipality became increasingly difficult, organisations of a political character began to manipulate the settlers' needs for land and public services in favour of their own political careers (Loera de la Rosa, 1994:17).

12. Failures in the provision of water during the 1960s paved the way for the formation of neighbourhood committees which came to politically institutionalize the voice of dwellers in the northern parts of the periphery. These include non-governmental institutions such as the Alianza de Colonias Populares, (ACP) (Popular Settlements' Alliance), church emergency programs and politically affiliated organizations (such as the PRI-committees) (Muro, 1992:155). Whilst years later, the CDP organization (Popular Defence Committee) took on the defence of squatters in Juárez, the Eighties still saw many ACP and PRI members campaigning for better infrastructure and higher budget allocation for low-income neighbourhoods (Barrera Bassols and Venegas Aguilera, 1992:18 and 24; also for a similar case in Monterrey, see Bennett, 1995).

13. This I realised on my walks through this part of the city in particular, as street fights and gangs abounded in corners and empty spaces. According to locals, the location of these settlements made them appealing to criminals. Delinquents escaping the national police and attempting to cross to the United States and/or those from the United States who succeeded in crossing the border may remain in the periphery indefinitely.

14. Whilst most cholos are reported to live in the northwestern settlements, some respondents also reported their presence in the southern parts of the city.

15. The CDP was born in January 1972 in Chihuahua City and then moved to Ciudad Juárez where left wing ideas spread rapidly (Lau Rojo, 1992:194).

16. Back in the 1960s in Juárez, as police raids intensified, settlers gained the support of local academics and students. Thus, the left-wing, Ignacio Ramirez group (or "Los Nachos") was formed with a permanent base in the local university. As organizer of the 1968 student riots and supporter of settlers, Los Nachos' next main front, the settlement "Francisco 'Pancho' Villa", during the Seventies became the most agitated focus of police action (Barrera Bassols and Venegas Aguilera, 1992:18; Muro, 1992:141).

17. Besides the well-known Pancho Villa's front in Juárez, other fronts born and named after local or international communist leaders or after local well-known subversive dates include the "Che Guevara's front", "September 9th front", "Mexico 68 front", among many others. The Eighties, just as previous decades, saw a multiplication of CDP fronts. By 1985, the CDP was organized in nearly 19 fronts holding between 30,000-40,000 settlers (Muro, 1992:142).

18. Wires on the sandy floors were particularly typical in CDP fronts where households connected electricity from diversions of main supplies. Thus, extensions of wires travelled from main sources to individual houses. Poor instalment of electricity made it a not uncommon event to hear of fires breaking out as 'live' wires came in contact with flammable materials.

19. For a full available list of CDP settlements in Juárez see Annexes, p.250.

20. According to María Idali Mendoza Ruelas (Vice-director Housing and Planning bodies in Juárez at the time of the survey), unless settlers hold legal papers establishing ownership of the plots, the municipality is unlikely to arrange proper water and electricity distribution to these places.

21. The INFONAVIT (Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores) or the Workers' National Housing Fund Institute was created in 1972. A national commission composed of government officials, employers and workers' representatives attempted to tackle the problem of housing deficiencies for workers in the formal sector. Housing estates were to be allocated to waged workers in the formal sector through a ballot system (García Flores, 1989:171-2). Whilst the willingness of employers to participate in the program was considered, in the mid-Seventies, a victory for the government, it was clear that INFONAVIT failed to address the needs of the poorest of the poor i.e. the non-waged population in the informal and rural sectors (Brachet de Marquez, 1994:137).

22. The INFONAVIT housing program in Juárez, as elsewhere in Mexico, does not operate in the same fashion it did in its origins. Lack of funds and poor administration meant that successive government administrations since 1976 had to transform the nature and forms of allocation of houses to workers. For many it was clear that the houses were too expensive and luxurious and for that reason neither the government could continue to subsidize them nor waged workers with minimum wages could afford them. As the situation of the country deteriorated and with an ever rapid foreign debt, the government decided to transform the INFONAVIT into a financing agency (Brachet de Marquez, 1994).

23. Fraccionamientos in Mexico refer to "privately sub-divided residential districts" (see Arreola and Curtis, 1993:154).

24. Whilst the city also contained the so-called fraccionamientos or "settlements created legally by private land companies or individuals" (Herzog, 1990:79), study and description of these are not included here. The reasons for this are: first, the ambiguous place these have in the urban morphology (i.e. some fraccionamientos held middle-income inhabitants and others upper income locals). Second, the study did not intend to include a comparative aspect considering low, middle and high income locals in Juárez but to focus on low-income inhabitants alone. Finally, the study already includes a triple comparison of employment, generations and life course and analyzing a fourth comparative aspect would have complicated matters.

25. Viviane Brachet de Marquez (1994) states that national figures concerning the number of houses built between 1972 and 1976 through existing housing programs for the poor showed that INFONAVIT provided more houses to people than FOVISSTE or INDECO. In her words: "judging by the output there was little doubt that the lion's share of money goes to [waged] labour [in the areas of commerce, services and manufacturing]: In four years, INFONAVIT produced 154,626 housing units nationally, the FOVISSTE, 14,655, and INDECO, approximately 28,000" (1994:138). At the time of the research INFONAVIT officials in Juárez announced allocation of an extension to the capacity of INFONAVIT. This in turn, a local newspaper revealed, would allow 660.000 workers access to INFONAVIT homes from 1996-2001 (El Norte de Juárez, 1996, 22 April, 1996, p3A).

26. As a financing agency, INFONAVIT's main goal was to provide eligible workers with credits for housing. I should remind the reader that housing estates were not built by the government but financed by the INFONAVIT agency (a state-run entity) which invested the money provided by employers in the construction of low-income housing. The INFONAVIT funding agency supervised private constructors in the construction of the houses (Herrera Beltrán, 1991). Concerning workers, the 1987 regulation determined that industrial workers willing to apply for INFONAVIT housing should earn less than three minimum wages per month and report their willingness to take part in the project to their trade unions. The procedure, once a candidate succeeded in her application, was as follows: first, the house price would be calculated in number of minimum wages at the moment of the acceptance which constituted the amount of money the workers had in a credit. Each month the worker would have 20% of her wages deducted towards her credit (except for workers earning one minimum wage monthly who would be deducted 19%). Payments, however, should not exceed 20 years (see Schteingart,

1989:152 as cited in Herrera Beltrán, 1991:134). Credits allocated to workers on the other hand covered not only acquisition of INFONAVIT houses but repair, decoration and maintenance. At the moment of the research a new extension to the INFONAVIT program was in place. Of the total 660.000 new credits available for workers in the formal sector in Juárez, 40% was to be allocated to those workers earning between one and one and a half minimum wages (see El Norte de Juárez, 22 April, 1996, p3A).

27.Herrera Beltrán (1991:136) mentions the political game that takes place in the allocation of houses in most regions of the country. Whilst INFONAVIT agencies appear to blame the trade unions for the prevailing system of preferential treatment given to 'friends' and 'supporters' of trade unions, trade unions in their defence state that it is the Executive Committee at the top of industry which determines how many houses go to each trade union in the first place. Thus, it is not surprising to hear that "thousands of workers may never have the chance to get access to the INFONAVIT houses" (*Ibid.*).

28.Arreola and Curtis in their (1993) study on urban cities of the northern Mexican border hold that publically financed housing barely amounts to more than 10% of a city's housing stock. Having said that, they also hold that this figure might increase with successive increments in numbers of industrial workers, enlarging the base from which tax for housing purposes is deducted (1993:156). Figures on INFONAVIT housing provided by Herrera Beltrán (1991:136) for the country as a whole report 5,084 total houses finished for 1973 and 37,737 houses in 1980. Total houses built in that period numbered 129,719 (reported source: INFONAVIT report 1973-1980).

29.The pilot survey was carried out between 1 - 5 Dec 1995 in the settlement called Altavista located in the northeast area of Juárez (region 1). Modifications to the questionnaire included a revised and more concrete version of the initial survey and changes in the wording of some of the questions.

30.Whilst I was most pleased to have been invited to take part in this meeting I was surprised to be publically introduced to settlers as a member of a local health, state-sponsored programme. Apparently, this was the only way to gain access to CDP fronts. To make matters worse, when the meeting started, I was invited to publically explain the purpose of my visit. I then felt forced to understate the real nature of the research. Whilst some settlers who initially allowed me into their households (thinking I was a health program officer) refused to proceed when they knew the real purpose of the study, some others appeared not bothered by the situation and were very welcoming. An issue that caught my attention during the CDP meetings was local low-income women's participation in politics. In fact, Juarenses low-income women's support for the PAN leader Barrios was evident (see Barrera Bassols and Venegas Aguilera, 1992; for discussion on women's regime politics in Guadalajara, see Craske, 1994).

31.Whilst 26 settlements were visited, one settlement 'Colonia Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez' was left out as the questionnaire collected from this settlement was not complete. Thus the questionnaire and the settlement were both excluded from the data analysis.

32.Three questionnaires were left out of the whole analysis (including the one mentioned in Note 31) due to the scant information available on them. Reasons for

incompleteness included respondents' unwillingness to answer some of the questions and/or their lack of time.

33. The age composition of these group of women with whom life histories were carried out was as follows: 10 women aged 50 and over, 10 women aged between 35-49 and 13 women aged between 17 and 34.

34. Sex workers were, on the whole, the exception since they preferred being interviewed at either their working place, their usual house-meeting place or in a cafe close to their workplace -except for one who did not mind being interviewed in her home.

35. These households were composed as follows: 2 held women aged between 17 and 34 with their mothers and 2 women aged between 35-49 with their respective mothers.

36. Reflexivity, according to Reay, can be considered: "in the sense of a continual consideration of the ways in which the researcher's own social identity and values affect the data gathered and the picture of the social world produced" (1996:60).

37. Although Carmelita's insights and guidance were mostly helpful during my stay in Juárez, her attitude towards me was tainted with great distrust. Carmelita showed her initial distrust in various ways. She gave me plenty of advice on not taking others' money and watched my movements in the house.

38. Whilst being aware of the problems that an account that highlights differences on the grounds of nationality poses, I should also stress the diversity of experiences that as 'beholders' of a certain nationality, researchers face while doing fieldwork (see Ramazanoglu, 1994:117).

39. This also applied to Carmelita who expected researchers from abroad to be 'Westerners' and to look 'Western.' As I did not conform to their expectations, she, as well as some interviewees, decided I was concealing the real purpose of my visit.

40. To my surprise, Mexicans in Juárez often despised and rarely associated with 'southerners', a word encompassing people of different nationalities, including Colombians. As I became interested in border Mexicans' views about people from the south, I started to explore the nature of this phenomenon. On one of my visits to the University of Texas at El Paso, I came across a thesis published by border Argentinian scholar, Pablo Vila. Vila and his collaborators (1994b) confirm the notion of a 'border identity' and his research findings from Juárez state that his interviewees had a derogatory perception of people from the south. As he puts it (1994b: 53): "when our interviewees talk about people from the south, they ... depict them in a very stereotypical way as being backward, without any fighting spirit and being more prone to leisure than work." Although Vila makes a clear analysis of northerners' perceptions of people from the south and the difference between Mexican 'fronterizos' and 'non fronterizos' it is not very clear whether the term 'people from the south' includes Guatemalans and other Latin Americans as well. I would, nonetheless, argue that it does.

41. The incidents allegedly started in January 1996, when the local media and newspapers reported that the dismembered corpses of two low-income women previously reported as having disappeared had been found in the settlements and warned local women of the risks of walking in the settlements on their own. Indeed, by mid-April 1996, 35 young women had disappeared and 17 had been massacred and thrown in a remote settlement close to the US-Mexican border (Diario de Juárez, Wednesday, 17 April, 1996 p 7b). As figures on savaged bodies multiplied, authorities from El Paso, shocked by Juárez' municipality indifference to their plight, began to put pressure on the Juarensé judiciary system. More distressing however, was to find out that the figure on the number of women and men who have disappeared in Juárez had reached nearly 300 a year later (The Independent Magazine, 10 May 1997, p 29). Urban violence however is not particular to Juárez. Research has reported increasing incidences of urban violence in many sites in low-income urban Latin America and the Caribbean (see McIlwaine, 1997 in Costa Rica and Moser and Holland, 1997 in Jamaica).

42. The first thing Guadalupe did was to rub sand on my shoes so that I would look like any other woman who lived in the poor settlements. Furthermore, she decided to take me to some second-hand clothes markets and chose my clothes herself. She said she had done so for many other people, mostly from Guatemala, and worried very much that I could be the target of local police harassment. Despite my insistence, Guadalupe paid for my clothes as she repeated many times 'you must be so poor'.

43. Carmelita took me to the prayer room and told me that she was the representative of a local religious leader who she referred to as 'The Master'. To my surprise, Carmelita and her friends were not Catholic but had long been members of a local Hindu-type religious movement, called *The Sai-Baba's Movement*.

44. Sex workers, in particular street walkers, a group which I had expected would refuse to be interviewed, also spoke frankly about their experiences as women, wives, mothers and workers.

45. Devon Peña's (1997) book on maquilas in the northern Mexican border makes clear in his acknowledgements the difficulties encountered in getting access to the information, with particular reference to Juárez. This, he maintains was due to the great numbers of academics that continually visit the area (Peña, 1997: ix).

CHAPTER 3

The New International Division of Labour and the Low-Income Juárez Labour Market

Writers in the field would agree that the arrival of the maquiladora industry in 1968 in Juárez played a prominent role in shaping the city's contemporary patterns of employment. Industrial parks combined with the flourishing numbers of low-income women in the work force, do justice to Vila's description of Juárez in the Nineties as "the female workers' city" (Vila, 1994a:57). Undoubtedly, Juárez' strong industrial development fractured previously existing trends of local male and female employment. As a receptor city of global assembly industries, Juárez has seen not only the emergence of a dynamic formal regulated sector in the economy that began to interact with the existing informal sector, but it has also registered changes in the composition of its local labour market by specific parameters of age and gender. Despite maquilas' rapid growth, they displayed a clear preference for younger women for assembly in the earlier days and more recently for adult and younger women to make up the bulk of their shopfloor work force. The limited presence of low-income men in assembly shopfloor maquila employment is a major contributory factor in the evolving employment trends seen among low-income groups in Juárez today. Maquilas' arrival in the city and their recruitment practices have certainly given rise to an alternative employment structure affecting older and younger generations in Juárez, in ways unimaginable in previous epochs.

The city of Juárez' evolving employment patterns seen in terms of the local informal and formal sectors and their gender composition will be the core of this chapter. Discussion of the New International Division of Labour will pave the way for a two-fold level analysis of the Juárez labour market including first, the impact of a newly-formed formal maquila sector and how it interacted with the low-income informal sector locally and second, the impact of maquilas on the gender composition of the labour market over time.

The New International Division of Labour

The arrival of manufacturing operations in many countries in Latin America, as well as in many other places in the so-called Third World, from the 1960s on, can no

longer be regarded as isolated events. They are part of a corporate strategy which seeks to ensure profits and markets through cost reduction mechanisms that ignore geographical boundaries (Sklair, 1991;1993). This managerial strategy, referred to as 'production sharing' or 'offshore sourcing' constitutes a labour-cost process in which manufacturing operations are relocated to countries with cheaper and abundant sources of labour, (best known as receptor countries) leaving behind, in investor or 'core' countries, organisational processes such as research, marketing, and financing (Tiano, 1994:12; Wilson, 1992). Besides providing low-cost labour, receptor countries willing to take part in the operation provide the mechanisms to ensure not only the manufacturing of goods but also that assembled products return to the country of origin (Gereffi and Wyman, 1990).

As existing policies in many receptor countries prevented production sharing operations, the concept of 'free zones' or platforms was created so that specific geographical areas within receptor countries permitted foreign corporations to develop transnational manufacturing trade for global exports (Grunwald and Flamm, 1985:3-5; Wilson, 1992:7 and 9). In reality 'Export Processing Zones' (EPZs) were created as an experimental strategy which enabled export-manufacturing without dismantling the tariffs and trade restrictions that protected domestic receptor countries' industries (Lim, 1990:102). The production sharing strategy may have seemed appealing to receptor countries' governments which added extra incentives to encourage the arrival of investors (Tiano, 1994:13).¹ In fact, entire countries later took on the form of EPZs with an open door policy for trade and commerce (Sklair, 1991).

As export-manufacturing spread throughout the Third World (the Philippines, Malaysia, Mexico, Sri Lanka, and Thailand) and, given the unprecedented success of the East Asian Tigers (originally Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea) as leaders in promoting manufactured exports mainly in the areas of electronics and apparel, the international labour process forged between the 'core' investors and receptors (countries or areas) generated lively debate (Gereffi and Wyman, 1990; Sklair, 1993; Tiano, 1994; Wilson, 1992). Among the pioneering works on the phenomenon was that of Fröbel and his colleagues (1980:15) who asserted that production sharing fuels a New International Division of Labour (NIDL). Written in the context of Marxist and neo-Marxist paradigms their theory presupposes a strategy of

capital to control labour. Put bluntly, their argument states that contemporary slums and similar poverty-stricken districts of the 'underdeveloped' countries provide a vast industrial reserve army of extremely cheap labour which ensures the prosperity of Western industrialisation. This process, they added was to mark a new stage in the evolution of the world capitalist system. While their theoretical development has been criticised on many grounds (see Grunwald and Flamm, 1985; Lipietz, 1987) many would agree that their work opened up a vast set of research enquiries on the dynamics of global labour processes.

As for Latin America, up until the 1970s manufacturing for exports played a rather insignificant role (Jenkins, 1991:6). Foreign debt commitments in many Latin American countries provoked international organisations to recommend export-led growth through the production sharing strategy (Sparr, 1994:2, 8-9). Not surprisingly, many governments quickly became interested.² The reason, simply put, is that there are macro-economic advantages to their economies in producing with foreign Trans national Corporations for exports: it allows them more efficient production, benefits from economies of scale, the earnings of foreign exchange and increased employment figures. No doubt, it seemed the solution to the problems confronting their economies (Hewitt et al., 1992).³ Moreover, US corporations in particular have seen in the proximity of low-wage Latin American countries, especially Mexico and Brazil, potential receptor countries. In fact, with the changes in American trade legislation in 1967 assembly operations in Mexico and the Caribbean were particularly enhanced (Tiano, 1994:18).

Just like in other receptor countries in the South, the arrival of assembly industries in Latin America and Mexico in particular initially provoked (and still does) many questions among researchers and labour activists (De la O Martinez, 1993; 1995; Fernández Kelly, 1983a,b; Tiano, 1994; Safa, 1981,1983,1986,1990). The main recurrent question appears to be why large numbers of young local women are recruited for the shopfloor assembly operations as opposed to hiring men. My initial concern with Mexican assembly industries started from a similar query and later research has made me realise that the controversy is embedded not ^{only in} ~~on~~ the fact that women are the preferred work force but that mostly young women are given dead-end jobs, paid very low wages, to be performed in very unfavourable working conditions

(Elson and Pearson, 1981; Humphrey, 1987). The issue gets more complex as empirical evidence has documented great demand for assembly industry jobs among local women and that many of the recruited female workers had done either unpaid domestic work in their own homes or in family businesses or other types of exceedingly exploitative work locally (Tiano, 1990).

Finally, it should be noted that whilst the firms engaged in the export processing strategy constitute a very heterogeneous group, with diverse degrees of technological sophistication and capital outlay ⁴, these companies constitute part of a global trend towards industrial production organised on a worldwide scale (Sklair, 1991; Tiano, 1994). From this debate it becomes clear that in order to understand the impact of export manufacturing operations on the lives of local low-income women, ^{the} main focus of my research, it is crucial to look at low-income markets in receptor countries and the position of low-income women workers within them. Thus, the next section will focus on debates regarding the low-income labour markets in Latin America, with particular reference to Mexico, and Juárez within.

Low-Income Labour Markets: the Formal and Informal Sector Dichotomy

Observations of labour market dynamics, and their internal structure and functions, particularly among low-income groups in Latin America, have led many to argue the existence of a formal and an informal sector of the economy (Thomas, 1995; Scott, 1994).

This duality of the economy had its beginnings during the early twentieth century as rapid industrialisation in Latin America was accompanied by elaborate tax and labour codes (see Portes and Schauffler, 1993:7). Such regulatory frameworks came about not only as a result of a growing pressure from unions who endeavoured to protect their industrial work force but also due to populist movements' desire to imitate the labour practices in place in developed countries. ^{Overpopulated} Latin American ^{over-populated} cities, combined with poverty, translated into the emergence of small firms which could not handle such expensive predicaments. Such accounts generated what is today termed a 'duality of employment', or the 'dual structure' of the Latin American urban economy, composed by the 'modern' or formal sector of the economy and the 'traditional' or the informal sector (Fortuna and Prates, 1989:79; Scott, 1990).

Whilst many definitions have been provided and multiple debates have emerged from the low-income formal/informal sector dichotomy (Castells and Portes, 1989; De Soto, 1989; Hart, 1973; etc.)⁵, formal sector workers will be here understood as waged workers engaged in economic activities regulated by the state, namely waged workers whose employment relations with employers fall under local, national or even international labour regulations, in terms of number of hours worked, contracts, minimum wages, access to social security, etc. (Portes and Schauffler, 1993:7-8; Ward and Pyle, 1995:47). In other words, it refers to low-income workers who have fixed schedules and wages and access to social benefits. In contrast, workers with flexible schedules, instability of employment and variable, if not unpredictable wages, and no access to social security, belong to the informal sector. That is, the informal sector incorporates those workers whose conditions of employment do not adhere to either national or local employment laws. Such conceptualisation would thus include most self-employed workers in low-income urban markets (e.g. street sellers, home-based producers, sex workers, etc) in the informal sector, and waged workers (factory workers, public servants, etc.) to the formal sector (see also Gonzáles de La Rocha, 1994:8; Mesa Lago, 1993:41).⁶ Although evidence from Latin America shows the weak protection given to formal sector workers, especially the waged poor, the social benefits received by waged labour have been recognised to be higher than those afforded to workers in the informal sector of the economy (Fortuna and Prates, 1989:81; Mesa Lago, 1993).⁷

A key point in the debate on the low-income formal-informal dichotomy is the interaction between the two spheres in low-income urban labour markets.

Paul Bairoch's (1973) early 'hyper-urbanisation theory' for instance, explained the informal sector in the Sixties as a composite of de-regulated, marginal economic activities, which resulted from an accelerated rural-urban migration. Given the unprecedented deterioration of the agricultural sector, the main motor of Latin American economies in the 1950s, combined with local industries weak capacity to absorb the growing numbers of unemployed rural migrants in the cities, newly arrived job seekers had to create their own employment options, most usually in the unregulated areas of commerce and services (Tokman, 1978).

Once employment regulations emerged and the local manufacturing sector took

off vigorously, the formal sector became central in studies on economic development (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Humphrey, 1987; Safa, 1981,1983;1986; Tiano, 1986, 1987a,b). Some studies which looked at informal sector workers regarded unregulated employment as a supply of labour which, while waiting to enter the formal occupational sector, survived by escaping the legal payment of taxes, performing low-income activities with intermittent wages, mostly self-employment (see De Soto, 1989; Tokman, 1978).

Contrary to this position were writers such as Arizpe (1977) and Luxemburg (1951, 1972) who questioned such views on the informal sector. Their argument called for special attention to the nascent interaction between the low-income formal sector and the dynamic, and in many instances, profitable informal sector (see also Castells and Portes, 1989). The informal sector, in their view, did not contract with the introduction of manufacturing operations but was strengthened due to the new needs of capital and its waged labour (pro-cyclical thesis) which largely opposed the former characterisations (counter-cyclical) (Portes and Schauffler, 1993:8). In other words, the pro-cyclical thesis regarded the articulation of the formal-informal sector as part of the capitalist system, as both sectors were seen as co-existing with one another. The argument follows that it is not that periods of economic expansion in the formal sector contract the informal sector (counter-cyclical form) but rather, that in times of economic crisis both sectors will suffer and in times of prosperity both will grow.

The pro-cyclical position (or the co-existence of the formal-informal sectors) caught attention especially as the growing incorporation of workers in the formal sector did not seem to slow down the rates of growth in the informal sector (Mesa Lago, 1993). Such a phenomenon, García (1988) explains, is the result of capitalist forms of production. In her words: "Capitalist production is foremost based on the production of goods. It requires complementary services for the full completion of its process... [Moreover, low-income] workers in industry, require an ample range of goods and services, for their survival" (1988:21). Her argument was confirmed by studies on parallel growth theories which hold that the growth of the informal sector of the economy may, in fact, enhance the purchasing power of workers in the formal sector. That is, the informal sector trade of cheap products and services allows low-income waged workers to reduce their expenses and stretch their income (González de la

Rocha ,1994:9; see also Mesa Lago, 1994:41 and 180).⁸

Employment Regulation in Mexico

In this section I shall briefly look into the formal employment sector in Mexico and the availability of social security services for workers in the last three decades, time when the maquila industry arrived. Within this framework the maquila industry will be located and explored.

The historical employment regulation in Mexico, from its inception to the mid-Nineties can be summarised as an agitated political endeavour, a continuously changing legislation⁹ with little practical effect on the needs of the local population.

Attempts to legislate employment relations since the beginning of the twentieth century (1906), have been plagued by considerable political debate over the merits of a decentralised system of workers' protection where, states or regions dictate their own employment guidelines and a purely centralised system (García Cruz, 1962:30; García Flores, 1989). It was in 1916 that José Natividad Macías, a member of the National Congress, determined that a future social security institution should be administered by the central government. In his words: "It is impossible to have employment regulation without a social security system. It is necessary that the state facilitates employers' duty to protect workers.... A small economic contribution from employers should allow the protection of the work force" (28th December 1916 Congress, as cited by García Cruz, 1962:52). Nonetheless, coordination of such a social security service was another matter of great dispute and, as a consequence, many workers in the country did not have any type of social security protection for decades. In fact, the few workers receiving any social benefits throughout the first half of the twentieth century (1910-1940) did so as a result of the independent 'generosity' of a few employers rather than a co-ordinated effort by the state (Mesa Lago, 1993:75). Whilst the regulatory framework concerning employers' duties towards workers (minimum wages, vacation payments, Christmas bonuses, etc) had long existed, it was only in 1944 that the Mexican Institute for Social Security (IMSS) (Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social), as it is still known in the Nineties, began operations for the benefit of the waged population (García Flores, 1989:106; Leal de Araujo, 1966:8). Workers, employers and the state contributed economically to the social security system which, in turn, protected the local

registered population, especially waged labour in the lowest economic stratum (Leal de Araujo, 1966:7). Whilst the IMSS was to cover for the needs of registered workers in industry, commerce and services, the need for legislation to cover other workers (informal sector workers and even rural workers) soon became apparent (Trueba Urbina, 1977:223).¹⁰

In the meantime, whilst IMSS health services reached many states in the country, they did not match the quantity and quality provided in central Mexico. Indeed, large urban cities enjoyed greater prospects of sophisticated IMSS hospitals, medical attention and community services than towns distant from these centres (García Cruz, 1962; Leal de Araujo, 1966).¹¹ Thus, small urban towns in remote places saw medical institutions solely attending casualties and outpatients for a long time (Leal de Araujo, 1966). Despite the considerable growth in the IMSS in large cities, it soon became clear that the reported accelerated growth in the IMSS reflected more the increasing numbers of people in need of the services than its efficiency. As the plans set out in the (1917) constitution proved too ambitious in practice, independent institutions were later created to specifically target areas not yet covered by the IMSS. Thus, in 1971 and 1973 the INFONAVIT fund (Instituto de Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para Trabajadores) or the National Workers Housing Institute and the Integral Family Development (DIF) or (Desarrollo Integral de la Familia) among many other institutions, began operations (García Flores, 1989:174-5; see also Trejo, 1974:63-73).¹² Although increasing numbers of people desperately required subsidised medical and social care, the investment in the social services system in the Eighties did not match the Seventies.

Indeed, the economic crisis of the 1980s plagued expectations about the future expansion of the IMSS services in coverage and specialisation (Mesa Lago, 1994 :ix). As president, Miguel de la Madrid faced a serious economic crisis, the adjustment of public funds began in order to service external debt. Social programs became the first target for reduction (Mesa Lago, 1994:102). Rampant unemployment in the country as a whole, a decline in real wages, rising prices and higher taxes altered the quality and quantity of services allocated to the waged poor.

Continued pressure to pay the foreign debt, plus lack of funds, inspired De La Madrid to determine that the provision of IMSS services was to take a decentralised form. Whilst many predicted better provision of services across regions in the country,

such expectations never materialised. The reason was that although the central IMSS stopped being accountable for the actual services delivered in regions in the country, the central government retained managerial command over workers' contributions (Mesa Lago, 1994:102). Regionalisation of the service throughout this time meant a reduction in social services in the southern and northern parts of the country and a concentration of services in the centre. Not only did the social services programme for rural sector workers see great deficiencies due to cuts in the budget, and a serious deterioration in transfer of services, but the emerging informal sector subsidies came to a complete standstill (*Ibid*).¹³

Notwithstanding this, as the country shifted from agricultural production to industrial manufacturing (García and de Oliveira, 1994:20) and once a period of stabilization was achieved, expectations of a rise in the government's income and IMSS revenue were very high (Mesa Lago, 1994:45). Nonetheless, whilst the number of social security contributors increased dramatically, IMSS services did not improve (Mesa Lago, 1992:107).¹⁴ Such a turn of events, Moreno Salazar (1992) explains, was the result of the central government's diversion of funds for other purposes. That is, whilst the central government adhered to a federal legislation centrally administering the funds derived from the contributions of the industrial work force in the regions, it failed to ensure the protection regional workers were entitled to through such payments. This, in particular, was the case for the industrial work force in the northern Mexican border region (Bustamante M., 1992; Moreno Salazar, 1992).

Scholars in the field of northern border studies have argued for a fully decentralised payments and investment system which would allow improvements to be made in the regional and local social security service (see for example Bustamante M., 1992). Whilst contemporary affiliates have access to services in the areas of health, (preventive and curative health, and maternity care) pensions, family subsidies (including health services to the affiliated worker's dependent or non-working parents and children living in the household) and other special subsidies in money (e.g. compensation for wedding expenses if the worker gets married and small allowances for breast-fed children in the household, see Macías Santos *et al.*, 1993)¹⁵, "it has been widely recognised that the IMSS has a limited capacity to cover the total numbers of the local work force" (Moreno Salazar, 1992:94).

Juárez Labour Market and the Arrival of Assembly Industries

This section will concentrate on the historical development of both the formal and informal sectors of the Juárez labour market, with particular focus on its low-income population, both male and female from 1940 till the Nineties. The analysis will focus on the arrival of the maquilas in Juárez and the transformations in employment patterns when maquilas consolidated locally.

The Composition of the Juárez Labour Market in its Pre-Maquila Stage (1940-1968)

Four intertwined features dominated occupational patterns from the 1940s until the arrival of maquilas in Juárez in 1968: first, the city's rapid urban growth reported after the Second World War; second, its everlasting economic relationship with its twin American city of El Paso; third, the sharp decline of the agricultural sector; and finally, the dominant role of the informal sector of commerce and services.

Many contemporary writers on northern Mexican cities have confirmed the complex connections between local historical patterns of urban growth, regional economic performance and development (Herzog, 1990:44-5). Juárez provides a clear example of such a relationship. As the city became heavily populated in the 1950s and 1960s¹⁶, the ever-enlarging pools of employable residents transformed the city's economic prospects (Fuentes, 1992:3).

Among the many factors contributing to the city's increase in population throughout these decades, Castellanos (1981) includes not only 'natural' population rise and lower mortality rates but also heightened intra and inter-state migration (see also Arreola and Curtis, 1993:26). With the reduction of land distribution and the constant budgetary restraints on credits for agricultural-related purposes in central Mexico, migratory trends from neighbouring rural towns in northern Mexico towards nearby cities became the order of the day (Herzog, 1990:41). Juárez, like many other border cities, began to act as staging posts for the throngs of rural migrants willing to take the available jobs, mostly in the agricultural sector, in southwestern United States (Alegría Olazabal, 1992:28). It should be noted that Mexican workers attempting to cross the border by no means constitute a phenomenon particular to this period or exclusive to rural workers as "for generations [rural and urban] Mexicans had crossed the border, legally and illegally, to seek work" (Sklair, 1993:28). In the same way that large mobilizations of undocumented, mostly low-income Mexicans, into the United States

have been reported throughout much of the region's history, north American authorities have also had a historical record of restricting the migratory flows. In fact, it was their effort to 'organise' the entrance of Mexicans that paved the way for the Bracero Program in 1942. The Bracero agreement, signed by the American and Mexican governments, was to cover for labour shortages, mostly in the agricultural sector in the southwestern United States, at the end of the Second World War (Sklair, 1993:28). Whilst Mexican agricultural workers could travel north, across the international border to work, such allowance did not put an end to existing controls on Mexican entrants to the States. On the contrary, vigilant mechanisms on the northern side of the boundary severely restricted the inflows, so much so that large numbers of 'illegal' Mexican workers began to be repatriated in the 1950s. As Castellanos (1981:118) reported: "In 1954, the Americans organised the so-called *wetback operation* where 1,075,168 Mexican workers were held by the police, nearly 11,000 were forced to leave the country and approximately 25,000 were *voluntarily* deported" (see also Bustamante, 1977). Ciudad Juárez, then, became one of the main receptors of repatriated Mexicans returned by the US immigration police, through the city of El Paso. Not surprisingly, from the 1950s on, Ciudad Juárez became heavily populated, absorbing not only the numerous Mexicans who 'willingly' accepted being brought back from the States, but also retaining the thousands of newcomers from nearby rural towns desperately wanting to cross north (Camacho, 1979:23).¹⁷

Rampant urban growth in Juárez between 1940 and 1950 multiplied employment opportunities in the local economy. The areas of services and commerce, in particular, showed signs of prosperity, prompted by local demand for goods and services for the ever growing numbers of residents. In addition, purchases of liquor, food, and souvenirs by American visitors also gave a boost to tourism.

The available figures for the occupational structure disaggregated by economic activity for 1940, 1950 and 1960 reveals the expansionary phase undergone by the service sector and the weak but steady presence of commerce and local industrial sectors. Agriculture and mining, on the other hand, did not have such promising scenarios.

As seen in Table 3.1, the main features of the Juarenses occupational structure from 1940 till 1960 were that whilst the area of services, and to a lesser extent,

Table 3.1 Branches of Juárez Economy (1940-1960)

	1940	%	1950	%	1960	%
Economically Active Population	13,572	100	38,665	100	73,665	100
Agriculture	2,132	15.7	3,435	8.9	4,738	6.4
Mining	82	0.6	217	0.5	353	0.5
Transformation (Industry)	2,611	19.3	8,433	21.8	16,385	22.2
Commerce	3,107	22.9	7,265	18.8	15,346	20.8
Services*	5,640	41.5	19,315	50	36,843	50.1

Source: INEGI; Also cited in Castellanos (1981:119).

Notes

*** Services include workers in the areas of construction, electricity and gas, communications and transport and civil servants.**

commerce, showed great dynamism, the local agriculture and mining sectors experienced serious deterioration (Castellanos, 1981; El Fronterizo, 3 June, 1957; Loera de la Rosa, 1990:18).¹⁸

The Juarenses industrial sector, on the other hand, experienced a rather weak development and, as a result, many basic consumption products were imported from the twin American city of El Paso. Unsatisfactory economic performance of the industrial sector at that time, Castellanos (1981:120) maintains, was due both to the isolation of the northern border sites from main producing centres elsewhere in Mexico and to the consistent neglect by central government. High transport and electricity costs combined with constant increments in local taxes and difficult access to the main supply centres of raw materials and products based elsewhere in Mexico, and not accessible locally, obstructed any potential expansion of the sector. Concerning job creation, lack of prosperity in the manufacturing sector translated into few jobs which gave a limited number of places to low-income workers in the formal sector of the economy at the shopfloor level.¹⁹ That is, "[During the fifties] the great bulk of workers did not have fixed wages, stable employment or access to any legal social security services" (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:19).

Moreover, not only were the places available in the formal sector scarce but they did not seem to give equal access to men and women. The shopfloor work force in the local industry in the fifties was largely male-dominated and the few low-income females reported in the industrial sector were not in the areas of production. Loera de la Rosa (1990:18) documents that whilst low-income men appeared concentrated in the production areas of soft drinks, food processing, beef packaging and grain processing, "in instances where women were engaged in the industrial sector of the economy their participation was confined to those areas remotely associated with direct production of goods or manufacturing" (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:18).

Moving on to the service and commerce sector of the economy, this sector, main motor of the local economy, openly welcomed the incorporation of low-income groups (SEP, 1988:171). Besides the agricultural sector jobs available, both across the border and in Mexico ²⁰, the economic activities available to low-income groups included commerce and services both in Juárez and in El Paso.

Whilst commerce and services are mentioned as buoyant sectors of the economy in the 1950s, available literature does not make it explicit if these sectors were

part of the informal or of the incipient formal regulated sector of the economy. That is, literature on the subject does not state if commerce and service workers were protected by labour codes and regulations or not (Zenteno Quintero, 1993).²¹ Writers in the field, recognising the associated problems both with statistical estimates on the economically active population in a border city like Juárez and the poor sources available on the evolution of the informal sector in the city (e.g. Lau Rojo, 1992), have nonetheless provided cues to help determine the extent to which workers in the sector were legally protected. An important point commonly recognised, besides the remarkable expansion of the local service sector throughout the 1950s in which "hotels, restaurants, cafes and cantinas increased 150% in absolute terms and absorbed from 33.2% to 36.5% of the total working population" (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:18; see also Commerce Register, 1956)²², is the underdeveloped regulatory framework in place in the country as a whole then (León de Araujo, 1966; Macías Santos et al, 1993). In Juárez in particular, the fact that registration of commercial establishments in the commerce secretariat then, did not require of employers the provision of social security services to workers, as it was solicited only for tax purposes (my interview in the local Commerce Secretariat, Juárez, 1996) confirms the incipient development of a system of workers' protection locally. Reduced figures on affiliate workers with access to social security services (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:24)²³ coupled with outstanding growth of commerce and services in the city, possibly self-employed and/or occasional workers in commercial establishments, make one think that these indeed formed the bulk of the unregulated informal sector of the economy.

Moving onto the gender composition of the informal sector in the 1950s, a great deal of controversy surrounds the issue. Whilst some argue that "women had a very low participation in paid employment and those few who worked tended to be concentrated in the area of services" (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:20), others argue that women actively participated in paid employment locally (Barrera Bassols, 1990:15). More radical even are the suggestions of scholar María Patricia Fernández-Kelly (1983a:180) who states that "until the maquiladora program appeared, the majority [of women] were not members of the labour force". However, such observations that deny women's active role in the labour market then have lately been disproved (Barrera Bassols, 1990; Reygadas, 1992; Tiano, 1987a).²⁴ Reygadas and his colleagues, in their longitudinal study in the State of Chihuahua, for instance highlighted women's participation in paid

employment throughout much of the state's history. Their findings suggested that during the 1940s and 1950s there was a shift in female employment patterns locally as former female agricultural workers and domestic servants began to join the booming service sector (Reygadas *et al.*, 1994:83). Similarly, INEGI figures, (Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística) main census body in Mexico, also report such dynamism as the variation in actively employed women from 1950 to 1960 (+8.3%) when compared to the variation in the overall number of women in the city (+7%) revealed local women's active involvement in the working population. Interestingly, such participation in paid employment appeared to be slightly larger than that reported for males in the same period. Furthermore, writers in the field, based on documents and case studies, have confirmed these trends, recognising women's active participation in the non-regulated, unprotected informal sector of the economy at that time. Research has, for instance, reported the case of female domestic workers who crossed daily to El Paso to work for a *patrona* (Ruiz, 1987) and the case of sex workers in Juárez has also been well-documented (Martinez, 1986:145-6; Price, 1971).²⁵ Equally, women's participation in the areas of casual waitressing, and shop assistance during the 1940s and 1950s have also been reported (Barrera Bassols, 1990:15). Finally, my own respondents who were adolescents of the era showed an active participation in the commerce and service sector (see Chapter Four and Five of this thesis , section on older women). Whilst the information presented above highlights the fact that women were actively engaged in paid employment, exact figures for the informal sector disaggregated by gender remain uncertain.

As migration flows increased in the 1960s, soon the throngs of migrants arriving in the city began to realise Juárez' insufficient capacity to absorb job seekers. Indeed, harsh un- and under-employment struck Juárez in the 1960s (Castellanos, 1981:120; El Fronterizo 29 May 1969; Loera de la Rosa, 1990:20). Fears of an aggravated employment situation prompted the federal Mexican government to 'integrate' the northern border with the rest of Mexico through an economic plan called the National Border Program or PRONAF (Programa Nacional Fronterizo). PRONAF, created in 1961, initially sought to boost tourism in the northern border through a process of 'beautification' (Arreola and Curtis, 1993:28; Sklair, 1993:28). Although funds allocated for Juárez were invested in the construction of hotels, shopping centres, sports complexes, parks and a museum (Barrera Bassols, 1990:16; Dillman, 1970), the city's'

expanding unemployment figures were not reduced by the expected emerging jobs in the service sector (Loera de la Rosa, 1990: 20). Thus, Juárez, during the mid-Sixties, appeared doomed to everlasting poverty and unemployment and the reasons were not difficult to discover. Barrera Bassols (1990:14) for instance, reports a dramatic picture of decline for agricultural workers throughout the Sixties. This was clearly shown, she adds, not only in the reduction in cotton production figures, the staple of the city, (see also Chávez, 1970 cited in Barrera Bassols, 1990:14) but also, in the impact that the implementation of modern agricultural technologies in the South Texas Valley had on the thousands of rural Mexican workers replaced by automated machinery (see also Fuentes, 1992:4; García, 1988:63; Sklair, 1993:46). Moreover, the end of the Bracero Program in 1964 did not help reduce unemployment figures in Juárez either, as the hiring of workers in the rural parts of southwestern United States was brought to a complete standstill (Barrera Bassols, 1990:15; SEP, 1988:166; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:21). To further compound the difficulties, the Juarenses formal sector of the economy presented a very pessimistic scene as companies such as Empacadora de Carne del Municipio (a local beef-packaging factory), Fierro Comercial (an iron-steel business) and a local textile factory Empresa Textil del Río closed down (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:20). From 1955 to 1965, despite the local authority's incentives to reactivate the formal manufacturing sector in Juárez, many companies could not remain in business along with emerging competitors across the border and eventually declared themselves bankrupt. Companies which survived and newly set-up establishments did not create enough jobs to absorb the great numbers of job seekers. In the light of such growing numbers of unemployed locals, it became evident that the initial attempts of the PRONAF program to 'transform' the border were not realised and the program eventually evaporated. In this respect Sklair (1993:36) comments: "PRONAF's dilemma, which it never came to terms with, was that the people of..Juárez ...needed housing, clean running water, and sewers rather than the beautification schemes and shopping malls." As agriculture went into decline, the economic prospects for the years to come in Juárez, in particular for the local impoverished groups, appeared very uncertain.

To sum up, despite a lack of reliable statistics on the informal sector, it is possible to argue that Juárez in the fifties showed an expanding informal sector in the areas of commerce and services which mostly absorbed low-income groups in urban Juárez and a weak formal sector which did not represent any real economic prospect

for the local poor. Juárez' limited capacity to generate employment for the rapidly growing non-employed impoverished groups brought the city to a virtual halt in the Sixties. Indeed, as the commerce and services sector became saturated and with a weakly developed industrial sector, Juárez turned into a city of jobless migrants. The occupational structure for low-income groups in terms of gender shows that there was a considerable number of males working in the informal sector and very few in the local formal sector of the economy; females, on the other hand, were either not employed or were engaged in the informal sector of commerce and services (Barrera Bassols, 1990; Loera de la Rosa, 1990; Reygadas et al., 1994). This was also proved in my own sample as older females reported that neither ^{they} ~~them~~ nor their partners had access to the formal sector during the fifties (see Chapter Four this thesis). ^{During the Sixties employment opportunities for both, low-income males and females dropped sharply.} ~~The Sixties, on the other hand, struck both males and females with rampant unemployment.~~

The Arrival of Maquilas in Juárez

Declining employment rates brought the city's economy to a critical state in 1965. The then Chamber of Commerce representative, Octaviano Campos Salas, depicted Juárez' situation as unfortunate (cited in Loera de la Rosa, 1990:20) and promised a brand new economic prospect for the years ahead. It appears that the PRONAF program brought to the attention of central government the plight of the area, and that as a result, industrialists and government officials explored ways of industrialising the northern Mexican border region (see Sklair, 1993:44 for details).²⁶ The idea materialised in 1965 through the Border Industrialisation Program (BIP), which gave free entrance to the city to foreign assembly industries (Cruz Piñeiro, 1990:70). In other words, the northern Mexican border region, a formerly mining and agriculturally-driven area was to be converted into a 'manufacturing for exports' platform, or an 'export processing zone.' Whilst the concept of free zones already existed in the country, what was new was their expansion in definition and in geographical location (Barrera Bassols, 1990:27; Sklair, 1993:47).²⁷ Thus, the northern Mexican border region was to house the manufacturing establishments of mostly American multinational corporations for the assembly of goods for global trade (Castellanos, 1981:116).²⁸ The appeal of such an option for the local government may have lain not only in the fact that local Juarenses were to be given desperately-needed employment opportunities, but also in that it did not conspire against the central government's attempts to neglect the agricultural

sector.

The first maquilas were set up in Juárez in 1968 and their multiplication became highly visible during the 1970s.²⁹ Indeed, between 1970 and 1980 the assembling of goods generated nearly 40,000 new job openings (Sklair, 1993:99) boosting the previously dim figures for workers engaged in the manufacturing sector of the economy (Barrera Bassols, 1990). Beyond the specific characteristics of the emerging maquila jobs³⁰, an interesting feature of the development of the maquila sector during the first half of the Seventies is that it did not drag along with it other sectors of the Juarenses economy. Confirming advocates of the counter-cyclical thesis while the formal sector began to expand, commercial establishments and the area of services showed little progress during that time (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:20).³¹ Consequently, workers who were not eligible candidates for jobs in maquilas saw in the Seventies an extension of the Sixties, with great hardship and unemployment or under-employment due not only to the fact that maquilas bought very little locally but also because workers often shopped in El Paso, where goods were cheaper (Sklair, 1993).

As Table 3.2 illustrates, the agricultural sector showed little sign of recovery in the 1970s and a sharp decline in the 1980s. Similarly, the share of commerce and services experienced a gradual decrease while the industrial sector revealed some dynamism in 1970 and progress in 1980, mostly due to the insertion of maquilas locally³² (Cruz Piñero, 1990:89). Maquilas in Juárez in the areas of electronics and apparel were introduced steadily and although their real impact on job creation was not clear for the first couple of years, within a decade their prospects appeared highly promising³³ (Cruz Piñero, 1990:67). Having said that, whilst the city's economic participation levels rose by 24% throughout the Seventies (Cruz Piñero, 1994:30), without doubt, unemployment in Juárez during the first part of the Seventies was still a matter for concern. This was clear in the First Congress on Industry (I Congreso Nacional para el Fomento de la Industria) in 1973 which revealed Juárez' worrying figures on permanent and temporal unemployment which constituted 20% of the total economically active population locally (Barrera Bassols, 1990:39). This seemingly contradictory trend of growing unemployment with maquila expansion locally, may be explained by the types of jobs maquilas generated. High labour turnover, reduced wages and benefits, and the gender composition of the work force recruited did not seem to help unemployment figures locally (see Sklair, 1993:103).

Table 3.2 Branches of the Juárez Economy (1960-1980)

	1960	%	1970	%	1980	%
Economically Active Population	73,665	100	108,070	100	206,868	100
Agriculture	4,738	6.4	9,342	8.6	6,366	3.1
Mining	353	0.5	403	0.4	276	0.2
Transformation (Industry)	16,385	22.2	19,215	17.8	44,586	21.6
Of which:						
-Maquilas	-		3,135*	2.9	39,402*	19
-Non-maquilas	16,385		16,080	14.9	5,184	2.5
Commerce	15,346	20.8	19,149	17.8	29,455	14.3
Services³⁴	36,843	50	47,426	43.9	56,733	27.2
Other**	-	-	12,535	11.5	69,452	33.6

Sources: INEGI; Also cited in: SEP, 1988:170 and Carrillo and Hernández, 1985:80.³⁵

*Extracted from Sklair, 1993:99.

Notes:

** Available figures on commuters (as explained in SEP, 1988:169).

Barrera Bassols (1990) holds that in the face of difficult economic prospects in the United States, the Mexican government implemented policies to stop the drifting of maquilas away from the border as it began to be recorded at that time. Generous concessions to corporate management largely overlooked local labour regulations. For instance, she reports that as 'inefficient' workers could be laid-off without the corresponding payments, and management could extend or reduce work hours to best suit corporate purposes, the number of workers recruited did not reveal the number of workers laid off. Moreover, workers would not be given a contract unless they 'passed' a new 90-day-test which automatically ruled out the previous 30-day regulation (Barrera Bassols, 1990:41) and any signs of workers unrest was quickly repressed (Sklair, 1993:105). As Sklair explains: "the fall of 1974 to the spring of 1975, [translated into] massive layoffs in Juárez affecting more than 10,000 workers, and about a dozen plants closed down" (Sklair, 1993:103). An essential factor in the expansion of maquilas in Juárez in the Seventies was that real wages dropped from the mid-1970s and throughout the 1980s due to the 1976 and 1982 currency crises so much that on several occasions increments in the minimum wage were recorded twice or more per year. As wages reached a critical 40% reduction in 1976 a bonanza for the maquila industry in Juárez where wages were calculated in US dollars became apparent (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:34; Sklair, 1993:38 and 105). In the face of growing numbers of job seekers and despite all the above-mentioned characteristics, it appears that maquilas represented the only increasing employment option for eligible workers in the Seventies. This was due not only to the stagnation of other sectors of the economy, but also the economic recession undergone in the whole country and in the United States.

Finally, and most surprising, the maquila labour force in Juárez was almost entirely female. Female assemblers were, for the first time, registered as making up the great majority of the local manufacturing labour force. Manufacturing operations for global exports in the areas of electronics and apparel soon began in the city.³⁶ Whilst young, single, childless women became the preferred work force for the unskilled and semi-skilled assembly operations in the rapidly expanding electric / electronic manufacturing, mothers, separated or abandoned women became the preferred work force the areas of textile garment manufacturing (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a: 106; Loera de la Rosa, 1990:25).

As for the male population, it can be said that because maquiladoras initially

Table 3.3 Maquilas' Growth in Juárez 1970-1979

Year	Number of Plants	Employees
1970	22	3,135
1971	52	5,617
1972	75	9,988
1973	72	12,058
1974	85	18,483
1975	86	19,775
1976	81	23,580
1977	80	26,972
1978	92	30,374
1979	103	36,206
1980	121	39,402

Source: Taken from Sklair, 1993:99.

hired few men, maquilas did not reduce male joblessness during this decade. In other words, the male work force in Juárez was, under this scheme, mainly confined to either the poorly paid and highly insecure informal sector or to open unemployment, just as it had been in the previous decade (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:56; Loera de la Rosa, 1990:29). It is, therefore, argued that, and as my own data will show, the difficulties that the workers of the 1970s faced in the light of employment opportunities were not explained by a simple lack of employment in the city. Rather, it was partly explained by the labour market segregation that initially marginalised some segments of the local employable population from the most dynamic and ever expanding local formal sector, namely maquilas, and by the specific characteristics of the maquila sector throughout that time (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:29; Tiano, 1987a). Indeed, the maquila workers of the Seventies in my sample saw growing employment opportunities in a formal sector which paid poor wages and escaped legal benefits. Whilst maquilas' neglect of the work force in the Seventies is quite evident, the central government's lack of concern for the workers and the incipient development of the social security service locally were also apparent.

Maquilas Consolidation in the Eighties and Nineties

The 1970s can be seen in Juárez as having paved the way for substantial maquila job multiplication throughout the Eighties and Nineties. Indeed, the decade 1980-1990 manifested itself in tremendous growth for the maquila industry, in particular in the branches with high technological base such as the transportation equipment sector, although the apparel industry also accounted for some maquila growth locally (Sklair, 1993). An interesting feature of the Juárez labour market in the Eighties was not only the consolidation of the maquilas in the city at a time when the whole country was experiencing a serious economic crisis (Reygadas *et al.*, 1994:18), but the fact that for the first time, maquilas dragged along with them other branches of the local economy, such as commerce, tourism, transport and construction (Young, 1986b:14).

As data in Table 3.4 indicates, with the deteriorating value of the peso not only did maquila employment as part of total employment expand (from 19.04% to 41.3%) but that the largely non-regulated commerce and service (informal) sector also expanded (from 29.3 to 45%).³⁷ The expansion of the formal and informal sector, Loera de la Rosa (1990:29) explains was the result of a deep economic crisis in the country

Table 3.4 Branches of the Juárez Economy (1980-1990)

	1980	%	1990	%
Economically Active Population	206,868	100	283,182	100
Agriculture	6,366	3.1	3,964	1.4
Mining	276	0.2	-	-
Total Manufacturing	44,586	21.6	138,759	49
Of which:				
-Maquila	39,402	19.0	116,954	41.3
-Non-Maquila	5,184	2.5	21,805	7.7
Commerce and Services	86,188	29.3	127,431	45
Other³⁸	69,452		13,028	4.6

Source: INEGI

Table 3.5 Maquilas Reported Growth in Juárez in the Nineties

Year	Number of Workers
1990	122,231
1991	123,888
1992	129,146
1993	132,089
1996	172,926

Sources: Various INEGI reports.

and the continuous loss in the value of the peso. Indeed, the informal sector, in being quite flexible in determining the prices for goods and services, he continues, helped the low-income population cope with the high inflation rates. That is, the non-fixed cash income earnings of the informal sector began to be in open competition with maquila wages. Confirming the procyclical thesis described earlier in this chapter, Reygadas and his colleagues (1994:74) state that the existing income gap between the formal and informal sector was inverted rapidly to the extent that it was more profitable to join the informal sector than to remain in the formal sector of the local Juarenses economy (see also Loera de la Rosa, 1990:29; Staudt, 1996). Moreover, the appeal of the informal sector was also exacerbated by the strong dollar which affected Juarenses' purchasing power in El Paso (especially after the 1982 crisis). The low-income population who did not earn in dollars could no longer parade around US stores as they had done so often in the past. Instead they began to get their goods supplies locally (Martinez, 1986:144). My own data on household composition confirms this point as cases where a maquila working wife lived with a husband working in the informal sector were not at all rare. Moreover, under these circumstances, social protection or social security provided by the formal maquila sector gained considerable significance (CEPAL, 1994:95). Despite the continuous decline of real wages an interesting feature of the maquila sector throughout this time (1980-1990) was the large number of maquila workers with access to social protection (Roberts, 1993:111).³⁹ Studies of the Juárez maquila work force in the 1980s have reported not only the steady rise in affiliation of maquila workers to the IMSS, but also the complementary bonuses and benefits maquilas provided so as to decrease existing high labour turnover in the shopfloor work force. Barrera Bassols (1990:32) reports that some maquilas in her sample, besides affiliating their workers to the IMSS and providing the benefits the federal government dictated for all waged workers,⁴⁰ had also covered their 1980s work force with life insurance and, in some instances, provided childcare, extra subsidies for food and transport, bonuses for punctuality and attendance, and recreational activities. In her words: "In the social services and payments context, it must be recognised that the maquilas in the Eighties and Nineties have different labour conditions from those reported in earlier epochs. Accounts of clandestine maquilas in Juárez which neglected workers' rights to social security services and paid workers under the minimum wage are certainly matters of the past" (Barrera Bassols, 1990:32; Sklair, 1993:215). Moreover, the desirability of these

incentives among the local work force is further highlighted by María Patricia Fernández-Kelly (1983a:106): "Although these may appear as modest benefits from the point view of organised labour in hegemonic countries, they remain exceptional characteristics in underdeveloped areas." Having said that, the scenario may not be as rosy as this suggests for workers, as other scholars in the field have consistently reported inefficiencies in the provision of services. Reygadas' (1992) study in Juárez reported that whilst workers in maquilas had access to social security services and INFONAVIT housing, most of the health services provided by the state were very poor and the INFONAVIT had certainly failed to secure housing for the majority of the maquila work force who badly needed it.⁴¹ Whilst, government inefficiencies in providing appropriate services for the work force appear quite evident, it is also apparent that the social services maquila workers derived from payments and benefits were higher than for other workers locally (CEPAL, 1994:95; Guillén, 1990; Hualde, 1992).⁴² Moreover, although the Free Trade Agreement signed in 1991 provided promising work conditions and enforcement of legislation which may indicate the future protection of the ever-expanding maquiladora work force in Juárez, it ensured neither a decentralised system of social security in the country nor better services of infrastructure for its local population (see Hualde, 1992).⁴³ Having said that, at the time of the research a local newspaper revealed an increase in the maquilas contribution to the government per worker for social security services (in 1995 maquilas contributed US\$10 per worker per year, in 1996 it was reported an increase to US\$15) (see El Norte de Juárez, 9 March, 1996).

Concerning the gender composition of the labour force for this period, general patterns of female labour force participation remained very similar to those seen in the previous decade. The 1980s and 1990s show high numbers of female workers in the formal maquila sector of the economy (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:35). This was evident in my sample as a good number of women were maquila workers at the time of the survey or had been maquila workers in the past. Notwithstanding, a great shift in the labour market composition for the 1980s and 1990s has come from the open incorporation of low-income males in the maquila work force and the permanence of female workers on the line after marriage and child birth. Whilst males on the line are still considered to be in the minority, explanations as to why men have stepped into maquilas in Juárez at operative level and the circumstances under which such shifts

took place have been a matter of academic concern.

Pearson (1994:351) explains such shifts as the result of demands superimposed by global competitive trade which obliged corporations to upgrade their technological base during the 1980s. This task, she continues, required training and the retention of workers if the investment was to be made profitable. It is due to the current technological sophistication, she argues, that women's share of assembly work employment has recently been reduced while men's has increased. Indeed, she adds that the sexual division of labour at all levels in society has included the production process in receptor countries, thus giving men 'male-type' tasks in the high tech processes such as the automobile industry while leaving 'female-tasks' to women in areas such as garments and apparel. Her argument may be confirmed by the configuration of maquilas in Juárez and their changes over time which show high numbers of high-tech maquilas in the city (CEPAL, 1994). However, these may not account for the reported presence of Juarenses male operatives in the apparel sector in jobs such as ironing trousers or sewing garments or women's incorporation in the assembly of electronic components for the assembling of autoparts⁴⁴ (Sklair, 1993:177) (see Figure 3.1).

Local scholar Loera de la Rosa (1990:35) in turn suggests that as the Juárez female participation levels for the 1980s and 1990s appeared almost saturated, clearly shown through the labour scarcity experienced by assembly factories during this period, men began to be recruited to work on the line together with local women. COLEF writer, Cruz Piñeiro (1994:37), adds that in the face of a female labour market saturation and as the indigenous non-maquila manufacturing sector deteriorated, the group of operative males released from the latter sector to the labour market were greatly welcomed in the maquila sector. Based on the 1987-ESAF aggregate figures Cruz Piñeiro argues that generous incentives provided by maquilas in terms of extra payments, bonuses and social benefits, both attracted these male operatives to the maquila sector and equally the maquila sector saw in these males' former manufacturing skills an appealing option (see also CEPAL, 1994). Of late, writers like Barrera Bassols (1990:23) and others have emphatically stated availability of female labour and their readiness to work even after marriage and childbirth. Nonetheless, ever dropping real wages in the industry combined with drainage of young female workers to El Paso, it is argued, have led maquilas to unintentionally create a local labour

Figure 3.1 Newspaper Advertisements Soliciting Males to Work in the Areas of Apparel

DIARIO DE JUAREZ

Miércoles
Febrero 28 de 1996
Cd. Juárez, Chih.

**NUEVA
HASE**
S.A. DE C.V.

S o l i c i t a :

GERENTES DE PERSONAL

- *PREFERENTEMENTE SEXO MASCULINO
- *EXPERIENCIA EN EL AREA DE PERSONAL
- *LIC. ADMON. DE EMPRESAS O EQUIVALENTE

OFRECEMOS: SUELDO ABIERTO SEGUN APTITUDES

OPERADORAS(ES)

**CON Y SIN EXPERIENCIA EN COSTURA Y/O
PLANCHADO DE PANTALONES**

INTERESADOS ACUDIR A RAMON RIVERA LARA No. 6750
ENFRETE DE SMART PRADERA, AT'N. LIC. ROSARIO
ROSALES. TEL. 17-59-50, O CARRETERA JUAREZ PORVENIR
No. 8126, A 100 MTS. DE COLOSO VALLE, AT'N. LIC. TERE
LINCE. TEL. 17-84-85

**Maquilados Tizoc
S.A. de C.V.**

s o l i c i t a :

**OPERADORAS(ES)
DE COSTURA**

OFRECEMOS:

- *Atractivo salario
- *Bono asistencia semanal
- *Bono asistencia mensual
- *Bono de despensa
- *Bono por puntualidad
- *Magníficos premios por producción
- *Excelente ambiente de trabajo

**UNICOS
REQUISITOS:**

- *Tener experiencia
en costura y ganas
de progresar

INTERESADOS presentarse
con solicitud para
contratación inmediata en
Morelia y Tizoc #5479,
Fracc. La Cuesta.

TIZOC	
MAQUILADOS TIZOC #5479	
MITLA	
La Chozas	MORELIA
	Gilmi Bertha Chiu
	Pantera Rosa
AV. TECNOLOGICO	

Source: Diario de Juárez, Ciudad Juárez.

Required: Female, Male Operatives,
with or without previous experience
in sewing or ironing trousers.
[my own translation]

shortage of young single educated females, former recruits for maquilas, leaving vacancies for males willing to comply with the requirements of shopfloor jobs available in the industry (see also De la O Martinez, 1993:82; Sklair, 1993:179). As Sklair put it: "labour shortages in the maquila industry refer more often than not to shortages of maquila-grade females [i.e. single childless educated females] rather than to a shortage of labour as such" (Sklair, 1993:179). An alternative view involves the active role played by the local municipality in power which explicitly encouraged maquila management to incorporate young males on the line early in the Eighties. As elected major, Francisco Barrios envisaged in maquilas a potential source of male employment especially as rampant male juvenile delinquency, namely cholismo, and unemployment were increasing. It was during his municipal direction (1982 -1986)⁴⁵ that cholos were encouraged to join maquilas as operatives. This municipal leader who identified the problem of cholismo locally as the result of widespread male unemployment, decided to persuade industrialists to recruit 150 of them to assemble goods on the assembly lines (El Diario de Juárez, 1985). Whilst the program was cancelled in 1986 with less than 20 participants left on the line, cholos were considered to have been left with the open option to be fully incorporated in the formal sector of the economy (Barrera Bassols and Venegas Aguilera, 1992:37; SEP, 1988:176) (To see other reasons why this municipal leader decided to include cholos as part of the maquila workforce see Chapter Seven [&] this thesis; also for a close look at ^{the} impact of cholos' presence on the line on the lives of women maquila workers in the sample see Chapter Five).

To sum up, conditions in the global economy as they articulate with the local circumstances have given way to distinct patterns of labour recruitment in the maquila sector locally. In order to understand the emerging age and gender groups that form the bulk of the maquila work force in the Nineties, an exploration of the life course of individuals as it relates to their employment patterns is required.

Contemporary Female and Male Maquila Workers Patterns of Employment

The issue of shopfloor employment in maquilas in Juárez has tended to revolve around considerations not only of whether young, single, childless women are still the preferred work force but also of who are the low-income males on the line.

Available material has revealed that female Juarenses workers no longer fulfill the stereotype of being single or childless or young as evidence has suggested that many

contemporary women maquila workers remain in the work force upon marriage and child birth in greater numbers than ever reported (Reygadas, 1992). As Tiano (1994:59) put it when referring to the contemporary, 1980s on, maquila work force: "The resulting pattern differed in key aspects from that of a decade earlier. Not only were women entering the labour force in greater numbers, but many were staying for a longer time."

Analysis of the 1987-ESAF data on the gender composition of the maquila work force in Juárez, dis-aggregated by age cohorts, revealed similar rates of employment across younger men and women with a rather constant participation of women along the life course, something not registered among males (see Cruz Piñeiro, 1994:32). Indeed, contemporary studies in the field have reiterated not only the large presence of 'mature' and younger women workers in assembly jobs, but also a high incidence of younger men (De la O Martinez, 1993; De la O Martinez and Quintero Ramirez, 1996; For a similar finding among Colombian women factory workers see Dombois, 1991). As my data will reveal, young males on the line, brothers and young husbands constitute part of the maquila workforce of the Nineties. Moreover, female maquila workers, Canales Cerón (1996:23) holds, on the whole, share higher permanence in maquila-related jobs across their working lives, something males do not (Canales Cerón, 1996:23). As we shall see in Chapter Four, most of my maquila respondents illustrated the pattern of permanence in the maquila sector across their working life. Again, this is corroborated by Reygadas and his colleagues who hold that for women who join the maquila labour market, lack of opportunities in the Juarensen non-maquila formal sector make movement to other economic activities relatively rare (Reygadas *et al.*, 1994). Notwithstanding, northern Mexican female workers' permanence in the sector, Canales Cerón (1996) adds, in no way refers to female workers' solid continuous employment in maquilas (or in a single maquila) but in the sector as a whole. In fact, female workers have been reported as showing less duration in each job within the maquila labour market than their male colleagues (De la O Martinez and Quintero Ramirez, 1995; see also Chapter Four and Six of this thesis). Notwithstanding, as women maquila workers grow older (50 and over) and no longer eligible to be recruited in the maquiladora sector, De la O Martinez (1993) continues, they are likely to move permanently to the poorly paid activities of the informal sector or to non-waged activities within the home. All in all, it has been recognised that female maquila workers' employment patterns along the life course by no means can be considered homogeneous.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the emergence and consolidation of maquilas as a formal sector in the city of Juárez. Whilst highlighting the role of maquilas, it attempted to follow the evolution of the low-income formal and informal sectors of the economy from the 1940 to the 1990s.

Within a weakly-developed formal sector, maquilas were established in Juárez as the main providers of shopfloor jobs, namely assembling of goods for global trade. The arrival of maquilas in Juárez in the Seventies undoubtedly opened up a great deal of controversy, not only because maquilas made of Juárez a receptor economy of foreign transnational corporations, but also because the low-wages, the precarious conditions, the labour recruited and the high labour turnover gave the sector a highly exploitative tone. The maquila sector in Juárez in the Seventies undoubtedly corroborated the claims of the New International Division of Labour theorists as the labour recruited comprised mainly young females, who were badly paid and poorly treated. Further, the contention arose as the local economy did not appear to provide alternative sources of employment for the desperately needy numbers of job seekers.

Contemporary practices of maquilas in Juárez call for a re-evaluation of previous works and conclusions. Although maquila wages continue to be a matter of concern, the fact that maquilas have provided workers with social security benefits cannot be overlooked. Moreover, the interaction of the formal sector with the informal sector in Juárez also calls into question the assertion that maquilas do not multiply jobs in economic sectors other than assembling of goods for export.

Analysis of the contemporary trends on the age and gender composition of the maquilas work force revealed that the increasing incorporation of males on the line is the result of a combined effect largely associated with conditions in the global economy and local circumstances. It confirmed women's increasing participation into the maquilas labour market after marriage and childbirth and revealed the increasing participation of younger men on the line. Local women's and men's participation in the maquila sector will be corroborated in the next chapter which will introduce the women in the sample and provide basic socio-economic data on the study's respondents and their partners.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Additional incentives offered to corporations willing to set up their operations in EPZs included not only tax exemptions but also inexpensive electricity, construction of roads, buildings and airports if needed, and other types of physical infrastructure (Sklair, 1993; Tiano, 1994:13).

2. As the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank later (1980s) decided to negotiate the provision of new finance and/or the rescheduling of loans with those Third World countries willing to subscribe to the operation of the free market, many countries felt they had little choice (see Sparr, 1994:8-9).

3. While all these can be seen as clear economic advantages, some Third World industrial actors saw this alternative as destructive to small and medium local industries. (Hewitt et al., 1992).

4. Whilst electronic firms, with a central position in the international economy are mostly large enterprises with great technological dynamism, high investment rates on automated production lines and complex labour intensive processes, some apparel industries, due to the instability to the market occupy a marginal position (Wilson, 1992).

5. Whilst some have equated informality with 'extralegal operations' (De Soto, 1989), others have encapsulated informal sector activities within the label of marginality and poverty (Hart, 1973). Others still have regarded them in terms of state enforcement of employment regulations (see Castell and Portes, 1989 for instance) (for a full discussion of definitions see Portes and Schauffler, 1993). Moreover, others suggest that the informal and the formal sector are, at times, so closely interrelated that divisions appear totally blurred. As certain characteristics are at times shared by both sectors (e.g. high incomes, high productivity) and some characteristics are not always present (i.e. not all workers in the formal sector may have access to social security and not all informal sector workers are unprotected), some have argued that the differentiation of the sectors is wholly unnecessary. Whilst it may be true that in some cases the informal sector may present some characteristics of the formal sector in terms of access to social security, in Mexico, such cases are generally regarded as the exception rather than the rule (see Mesa Lago, 1994).

6. Indeed, the formal/informal sector definitions as conceived here will move beyond conceptualisations which equate the informal sector with poverty and the formal sector with higher wages. Moreover, these conceptualisations are in tune with some Mexicanists' definitions of the sector: Carmelo Mesa Lago, for instance, when referring to the Mexican case, defined it as "economic activities which are performed in urban areas (outside the formal -regulated- sector of the economy usually in a clandestine fashion, and therefore devoid of social protection)" (1993:41). Mercedes Gonz  les de La Rocha (1994:8) states: "The informal sector encompasses all income generation outside of wages and social security earned in the formal sector."

7. Mesa Lago's article on Social Security and the Informal sector in Mexico revealed that whilst some workers in the informal sector have access to maternity care and day care centres (in the case of domestic servants, for instance), his analysis showed that less than 1% of the informal sector workers in Mexico were, at the time of his study, covered

by social security (Mesa Lago, 1993:76 and 79).

8. An interesting form of interaction between the informal and formal sectors however is subcontracting or the 'putting out system' (also called homework factory production). Scholars such as Fernández-Kelly and García (1990) and Benería and Roldán (1987) among many others, document cases where manufacturing operations are informalized. Under this scheme, female workers whilst engaged in the manufacturing process, assembling textiles or electronic components, are not directly linked to the formal sector. That is, they lack the employment protection that rules the work relationship of workers in the informal sector. Although these types of operations have been reported as a common-place phenomenon in Mexico (see García Colomé, 1990; Peña St Martin, 1994a,b), they had not been reported in Juárez at the time of the study.

9. This was clear in the National Social Plan or (Plan Social Nacional) created in 1911 (García Cruz, 1962), then in the first comprehensive Employment Law put forward in the National Chamber (García Flores, 1989) in 1917 and the subsequent modifications (see Trueba Urbina, 1977).

10. Thus, the State Workers Social Security Services Institute (ISSTE) (Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado) born in 1959, was parallel in scope and economically reliant on workers and state contributions (Trueba Urbina, 1977). The emergence of the ISSSTE in Mexico dates from 1910. Workers' integrated efforts to seek protection from the state were due to the weak operating system of partial pensions which prevailed throughout the first half of the century (Trueba Urbina, 1977). Whilst the ISSTE started operations in 1959, it has been subjected to legislative modifications since. In 1960, it became part of the constitution and in 1963 was amended making it open to future changes according to the economic situation of the country and the number of active affiliates regularly contributing. On the other hand, although great efforts started to be carried out to cover agricultural workers, it was only in 1976 that COPLAMAR (Unidad de Coordinación General del Plan Nacional de Zonas Deprimidas y Grupos Marginados) was established. Poor funding and serious neglect by the central government meant COPLAMAR could not cover as many workers as it initially intended to (Mesa-Lago, 1994). Finally, informal sector workers, reported to fall within the scope of the IMSS, have been badly affected by poor IMSS coverage of the informal sector and its little concern with self-employed workers or self-affiliates (Mesa Lago, 1993).

11. Whilst the IMSS in 1950 covered health alone, and solely in cases of injuries at work, in 1964 services provided by the IMSS to affiliates included services such as subsidies in money (i.e. wedding subsidies, compensations for injuries, pregnancies, etc.) and social or community services (i.e. cultural, recreational and sports programs for workers and their families) (García Cruz, 1962; Leal de Araujo, 1966).

12. Other institutions created during the Seventies to complement the provision of services given by the IMSS included INPI (Instituto Nacional de Protección a la Infancia), etc. (García Flores, 1989:174-5).

13. Mesa Lago's case study demonstrates how social security programs during the 1980s in Mexico to some extent 'pampered' workers on the IMSS (i.e. waged workers in the areas of transformation and, to a lesser extent, workers in the areas of service

and commerce) and neglected agricultural workers (i.e. workers covered by the newly created IMSS-S) (Mesa Lago, 1994:104-5).

14. The increase in waged workers has been reported to be a national phenomenon (García and De Oliveira, 1994:20) most likely due to the central government's interest in boosting industry and neglecting other sectors. Mesa Lago's (1994) figures on numbers of affiliates in Mexico confirms this trend as he reports that whilst over 93% of total waged workers in Mexico were insured with the IMSS at the time of his study (1992), 96% of non-waged workers (i.e. informal sector workers and rural workers) were not protected by any type of social security services (1994:107). (His sources are derived from the 1987 economically active population in Mexico).

15. Employers of waged workers, according to the current law, must register all employees within the first 5 days of the employment relationship commencing and must deduct, every other month, a percentage from workers' wages, which must correspond to the amount stipulated by the central government. If the worker withdraws from the labour force and does not engage in paid employment in the formal sector she can continue contributing independently (Macías Santos *et al.*, 1993; Trueba Urbina, 1977:129,132-3).

16. Juárez' population in 1940 was 55,024; in 1950, 131,308 and in 1960, 276,995 (Source: INEGI, see also Castellanos, 1981:109, Sklair, 1993:35).

17. Castellanos also confirms this point as she reveals that during the 1950s, over 60% of the population registered as living in the city of Juárez was of migrant origin (Castellanos, 1981:108).

18. It should be stressed that figures on the economically active population in Juárez based on the National census for 1940, 1950, 1960 and even 1970 have persistently been considered to pose great difficulty to analysts and academics (Cruz Piñeiro, 1990:62). This is due not only to the fact that many Juarenses daily crossed (and continued to do so throughout the Eighties and Nineties) to El Paso to work, making the registration a very complex undertaking (Castellanos, 1981) but also because of the growing inter-state migrants arriving in the city (Alegría Olazabal, 1992:50). To further compound the difficulties, Lau Rojo maintains that poor sources for that time, in particular for the Juarenses informal sector of commerce and services, made historical analysis of the occupational structure a challenging task (Lau Rojo, 1992; Méndez Maín, 1990). Beyond the difficulties posed by the census data reported by the National Census, evidence from that time has confirmed the broad trends show in the table (Castellanos, 1981; El Fronterizo, 3 June, 1957; Loera de la Rosa, 1990:18).

19. This is confirmed by social security records of that time (Leal de Araujo, 1966:7-8).

20. Mostly in the areas of cotton production where men and women played an active part (see Barrera Bassols, 1990:15; Guerrero Miller, 1993). Indeed despite the lack of statistical data on the agricultural sector segregated by gender for this period, evidence suggests that Juarenses males, as well as females, were actively engaged in agricultural-related activities locally. For instance, Barrera Bassols's (1990:15) study reports the existence of female tomato and strawberry pickers in Juárez during the

1960s and Guerrero Miller's (1993) paper shows evidence of female cotton producers in the northern Mexican area for extended periods throughout much of the twentieth century (see also Reygadas *et al.*, 1994:83). Given the serious deterioration of this economic sector, it would not be surprising if agricultural workers, both males and females, throughout that time, experienced acute hardship. As the sector weakened over time it is likely that many attempted to either participate in the local booming commerce and services sectors or crossed to the States to work in the agricultural sector under the Bracero program.

21. It was only in 1987 with the ENEU survey (Encuesta Nacional del Empleo Urbano) or the National Urban Employment Survey that analysis of the informal sector was made possible in the border cities (Zenteno Quintero, 1993:72). This said, available records on numbers of social security affiliates locally revealed that, it was only until 1963 that figures on waged workers from the lowest economic stratum began to take off (Leal Araujo, 1966: 7-8).

22. Records on registered commercial businesses for 1956 reveals that 267 establishments including restaurants, cantinas, bars and nightclubs were operating in Juárez at that time (Commerce Register, 1956).

23. This is confirmed by the social security records as 30,000 full-time workers appeared as registered affiliates between 1960 and 1970 (CEPES, PRI, 1972 cited in Loera de la Rosa, 1990:24), a figure reported as very high with respect to the previous decade. This said, in a city of nearly 250,000 inhabitants, as Juárez was before the 1970s, 30,000 affiliates is not significant when referring to the number of low-income populations, especially as the above-mentioned figure incorporated all categories of workers including professionals and technical workers.

Dalia Barrera Bassols'

24. Her study conducted in 1981 with maquila workers in Juárez revealed that only 16% had not worked prior to their insertion in maquilas and that only 5% were students prior to their insertion into working life (Barrera Bassols, 1990). Moreover, this was also corroborated by Reygadas' (1992:16) study as he found that maquila workers' mothers had long employment histories in the informal sector of the economy.

25. With nearly 25,000 military personnel throughout the 1950s, El Paso undoubtedly was (and still is) a source of income for many low-income female sex workers in Juárez (Vila, 1994a).

26. It is important to note that Sklair (1993:44-45) highlights the difficulty in precisely pinpointing the origins of the maquila industry. Thus, Octaviano Campos Salas, as a pioneer of the strategy, may offer but a single account among the many possible versions of who initially proposed the idea of maquilas in Juárez.

27. The concept of free zones already existed in Mexico when maquilas first arrived. In fact, prior to the arrival of maquilas in northern Mexico, there were various 'free zones' in place where foreign investment was allowed. Sklair (1993:44) documents the case of Tijuana where "export oriented assembly plants, US owned and sourced" came into place as far back as the 1950s. Thus, what appears new about the new trade zones is not only their geographic expansion (i.e. the fact that the whole northern Mexican border became a 'free zone') but also the incentives that came along with it. Thus, investment

control, fiscal and price exemptions, were included among the added incentives given to foreign investors (Barrera Bassols, 1990:27).

28. This process took place through the enactment of the Border Industrialization Program (BIP). The BIP allowed the duty-free import of raw material components, machinery and parts as long as the foreign or Mexican investor guaranteed the re-exportation of assembled products. In other words, products assembled in northern Mexico were to leave to the country of origin free of tax (Castellanos, 1981:116). The BIP was seen as the solution to the growing pool of surplus northern Mexican labour while also being a cost-effective alternative for American transnational corporation investors.

29. In fact, Juárez showed greater growth with its maquilas than anywhere else in the northern Mexican border region in the Seventies. Records reveal that by 1973, Juárez had more plants and far more workers than any other site in Mexico (Schwartz, 1987; Sklair, 1993:103).

30. Whilst both electronics and apparel firms made their presence felt in Juárez, it soon became apparent that their working conditions varied. Indeed, "compared to electronics jobs, apparel assembly jobs tend to be more strenuous, more prone to recruitment abuses, and less apt to offer amenities such as cafeterias" (Tiano, 1994:27). This said, apparel jobs also became well known for their high skill requirements and the direct supervision carried out by supervisors and not by automated machinery.

31. Loera de la Rosa reports that the 1965-1975 Minimum Wage National Commission Report (Comisión Nacional de Salarios Mínimos, CNSM) demonstrated that just as in earlier decades, commercial businesses in Juárez grew steadily but did not overtake 3 workers per establishment (CNSM, 1975 cited in Loera de la Rosa, 1990:20).

32. It is important to note, however, that other manufacturing industries locally may have also showed a slight recovery. Barrera Bassols (1990:17) documents that small and medium industries in the transformation of goods and services (beer manufacturers, milk processing, packaging companies, etc) also began to show signs of growth as maquilas expanded in Juárez in the Seventies. Having said this, she also maintains that whilst maquilas in the Seventies absorbed 21.27% of the economically active population, the local manufacturing sector never surpassed 7.9% (*Ibid.*:18).

33. Whilst the first maquilas that arrived in Juárez were concentrated on the assembling of wood products, clothes and electronics goods, later, apparel and electronics consolidated in the city (Barrera Bassols, 1990:16; Sklair, 1993)

34. Includes workers in the areas of construction, electricity and gas, communications and transport, and public sector workers.

35. Statistical information on the 1980 census and the estimates derived on economically active population for the 1980s presents serious deficiencies just as other censuses in previous epochs (García, 1988). Moreover, analysts have warned scholars in the field to be aware of the diversity of concepts used in the collection of the data, not only across decades, but among collectors in a same year (Cruz Piñeiro, 1994:27). Bearing this in mind, the table presenting figures for 1970 and 1980 serves to indicate broad

trends which are confirmed by evidence from elsewhere and later by the ESAF data (Loera de la Rosa, 1990:21). On the other hand, the ESAF or the Annual Socio-Economic Survey of the Border (Encuesta Socio-Economica Anual de la Frontera) carried out in 1987 and the ENEU (National Urban Employment Survey) with a trimestral publication from 1989, constitute regional and national academic attempts to counteract the persistent deficiencies experienced with the National Census (See Cruz Piñeiro, 1990:62). Both sources, ENEU and ESAF, will be reported in the thesis from the moment their data was available.

36. Although differences between these two types of industries are clearly visible, they share a similar position in the global market as they take part in the transfer of labour intensive phases of production to the developing world (Sklair, 1991).

37. An interesting feature that emerged throughout this time was a powerful CDP which united the interests not only of settlers, as seen in Chapter Two, but of workers in the informal sector, especially cab drivers (See Lau Rojo, 1992).

38. Figures on number of commuters should be read with caution. Given that different criteria were used historically to determine whether or not commuters and non-employed locals were part of the economically active population, the issue of real number of legal and illegal commuters traveling from Juárez to El Paso to work will not be expanded here. The table rather is used to highlight maquilas growth locally in relation to the service and commerce sector.

39. In his analysis of the ENEU survey, Bryan Roberts (1993:101) found that in 1989 Juárez had one of the highest social security coverages in the whole country. Moreover, he reports that from the seven large cities his analysis considered, manufacturing appeared as a major source of access to social security to workers, as 50% of all workers with access to social security services were concentrated in large firms. This is confirmed in Juárez, as at the time of the research, 60% of all workers with access to social security services in the city were maquila workers (see El Norte de Juárez, 9 March 1996).

40. Compulsory benefits the federal government has stipulated for waged workers include: payment for vacations, extra half payment for vacations (prima), Christmas bonus, profit participation, access to IMSS social security services, access to INFONAVIT and retirement saving system (SAR) (CEPAL, 1994:95).

41. Figures on houses built in Juárez through INFONAVIT programs in the Eighties and the beginning of the Nineties include: for 1988: 1,346 houses; 1989: 1,145 houses; 1990: 1,090 houses (Delegación de Chihuahua INFONAVIT, cited in Reygadas, 1992:45). Whilst the INFONAVIT planning association had envisaged allocating, on average, 1,000 houses per year, in 1992 no houses were registered as in the process of allocation. This serious decline may be confirmed in Reygadas' 1992 study in Juárez as only 6.4% of maquila workers had succeeded in getting an INFONAVIT credit for housing purposes (Reygadas, 1992:45).

42. High social security coverage for workers in Juárez is supported by Roberts (1993:101) and by Hualde's (1992) paper. Hualde reports that 36.3% of Juárez maquila workers' total wages corresponded to social benefits in 1990 (Hualde, 1992:223).

CEPAL's (1994) report also confirms that maquila additional benefits not provided by any other local economic activity in the local formal sector in 1993 made up nearly a third of workers' wages (CEPAL, 1994:95).

43. Interestingly, it is also alleged that improvements in the provision of social security for the industrial work force would further exacerbate the economic differences between them and the rural sector and informal sector workers locally (For a discussion, see Bensusán Areous, 1992).

44. I should note that while being aware of the differences that exist between assembling for maquilas in apparel and assembling for maquilas in electronics and the varying impact it may have on women's lives, this thesis will not specifically look into the issue. However, at times it will record specific issues related to the incorporation of women into one or another if relevant and necessary. Reasons include, not only because manufacturing operations for apparel and electronics share the position in the international economy as they, at large, take active part in production sharing strategies that seek to minimize costs by transferring the manufacturing processes from North to South, the main issue of my concern, but also, because assembly industries in general establish a subdivision of the labour market in terms of age and gender. For specific outcomes of women's engagement into one form of maquila or another, see Tiano (1994).

45. In July 1983, for the first time in the history of Juárez, an opponent of the dominant PRI party, the PAN leader was elected as municipal major. Francisco Barrio, an engineer and previous collaborator to an important local industrial group, became a fierce opponent of the already established traditional PRI party. Whilst Barrios counted on the local support of upper middle classes, his administrative period appeared characterized by his concern with the low-income groups (see Barrera Bassols and Venegas Aguilera, 1992; Guillen, 1990; Guillen, *et al.*, 1990:290-297; Lau Rojo, 1990).

CHAPTER 4

Three Generations: Employment, Households and Individual Characteristics

Chapter Three examined employment trends with special focus on the arrival of the maquila industry in Juárez. In it, I argued that the impact of the maquila industry on the local low-income Juarenses labour market was reflected not only in the high numbers of shopfloor workers (especially women) engaged in this economic sector, but also in the resulting dynamics between an emerging maquila formal sector and the local informal sector. Undoubtedly the insertion of the maquiladora sector in Juárez has had great impact on the resulting patterns of gender and age employment differentiation in particular among the low-income groups living in the city.

Whilst macro data are illuminating of local employment patterns, micro studies, and, in particular, in-depth analyses of industry from the perspective of the work force can help explain the specific conditions under which particular segments of the population are released into the labour force (see Acevedo, 1995:87; Brydon and Chant, 1989; Chant, 1991:12; Fernández-Kelly, 1989; García and De Oliveira, 1994: 242). Consequently, this chapter will move beyond macro-data occupational analyses and instead will concentrate on specific micro level analysis. It will present a socio-economic analysis of respondents' occupational trends with focus on maquila workers, their households and their individual characteristics. In other words, the main aim of this chapter is to introduce the respondents in the sample.

Theoretical Considerations: Ideologies around Age and Gender, Households' Socio-Economic Data and Individual Characteristics

Examination of a particular sector of the population (e.g. women) deserves a consideration of their specific position - as individuals who are endowed with personal characteristics - within households, and wider cultural, societal norms transmitted through the household unit (Anker and Hein, 1986). Chant (1991:13), with respect to this, refers to various factors at the household and individual levels which include social ideological aspects of family organisation, demographic characteristics of the domestic unit and personal characteristics (i.e. age, education, marital status, etc.).¹ Indeed, not only is the consideration of household and personal characteristics revealing of constraints and factors propelling women and/or men into the labour market but

prevalent ideologies have, more often than not, shaped women's and men's entrance into economic activities including factory employment (Tiano, 1994:49). As Fernández-Kelly (1983a:151) points out: "a study of offshore assembly plants, must include an analysis ... of the concrete conditions found at the household and community levels."

Moreover, all three sets of variables (1-social and ideological aspects of family organisation; 2-demographic characteristics of the household unit; and 3- personal or individual characteristics) interact with one another along the life cycle (Chant, 1991; Tiano, 1994). A closer look at these variables will reveal intricate connections.

Social Ideological Aspects

Recent gender-aware research has encouraged analysis which includes a consideration of social-ideological factors. In fact, its neglect has been a source of much criticism: "Lack of analysis of.. cultural valuations and ideologies is a frequent flaw in many of the sociologically oriented [gender] analyses" (Moore, 1988:31). Thus, it has been increasingly recognised that inclusion of analysis on cultural background in which household and individual changes occur, for instance, must involve a careful consideration of prevalent ideologies within families (Chant, 1991; Tiano, 1994). When referring specifically to households and gender inequality, the consideration of social ideological factors has been justified on various grounds. Reasons given include: firstly, underlying ideologies speak about differentiated rights and obligations across cultures; secondly, people's notions about an existing social order at different times in history is an emerging area of enquiry; and thirdly, studies which consider the social ideological aspects ultimately reflect the places men and women occupy within that social order at different times of their lives (González Montes, 1994:175). However, not only is it important to consider gender ideologies when examining local social norms related to each culture and set of historical circumstances, but also age-related norms, as these reveal hidden hierarchies and cross-cut gender relations at the household level (Arber and Ginn, 1995). In addition, although age and gender relations are thought to differ across geographical, cultural and historical contexts, in most societies, women's share of reproductive labour at the household level is considerably more significant than that assigned to and expected of men (Cleves Mosse, 1993; Moore, 1988:43). Latin America, and Mexico in particular, are no exception, as male and female roles still bear the imprint of sharp gender and age inequality (Chant, 1991; García and de Oliveira,

1994:209; González^Z de la Rocha, 1994:30; Scott, 1994:92).

Gender Ideologies In Latin America

Many would agree that Latin American females are assigned a lower status, both in private and public spheres, than that given to adult males (Hardoy et al., 1993). Mercedes González^Z de la Rocha (1994:140) when referring to working class Mexico explicitly states: "in the particular case of working-class Mexic[o],.. women.. have, on the whole, less command over, and less access to, resources (money, goods and time)." Thus, at the level of the household, most Latin American women, as well as most women worldwide, are channelled into undertaking primary roles with specific meanings for the women concerned (Gutiérrez de Piñeda, 1996:96; Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993). Daughter, wife and mother are roles which interplay along the life course of most Mexican women, Norma Ojeda de la Peña confirms, imparting a set of obligations which differ in crucial respects from the roles of son, husband and father allocated to their male counterparts (Ojeda de la Peña, 1989; see also Chant, 1994:96).

At the conceptual level, unequal gender roles and relations at the household level in Latin America have only been given careful consideration since the 1970s. One of the most recognisable features incorporates machismo or male dominance (Cubbit[†], 1995:111; Scott, 1990:205-6). Levine and Sunderland Correa (1993:79) argue that the roots of male dominance in Latin America can be traced back to the combination of two historical factors: first, the sixteenth century Iberian legal code introduced by the Spanish (including the conquerors) under which women were deemed "imbeciles by nature"; and second, the Spanish discrimination against the indigenous population upon conquest. These factors combined, resulted in an inferior position for native women. This is confirmed by Gutiérrez de Piñeda and Vila de Piñeda (1992) in their case study on honour, patriarchy and society in a Colombian city. They maintained that an inherited concept of 'honour' based on 'blood purity' by Spanish descendants imposed a hierarchy based on ethnic background which added an extra element to the existing gender inequality in Latin America. Later, from the unions of Spanish (usually) males and local indigenous (usually) females, the mestizo race (combination of Spanish and indigenous people) emerged. Interestingly, the mestizo culture, they observed, developed an enhanced form of machismo or male dominance with a "distinctly

aggressive element" (Gutiérrez de Piñeda and Vila de Piñeda, 1992; Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993:79). According to their views, machismo, underpinned by a patrilineal kinship system, endorses male power within the household. Under this ideology, males who want to be considered 'real' men by social standards, are expected to assume authoritative roles towards women and children (see also Chant, 1994:91; Scott, 1990:205-6). Ingoldsby (1991:57) described the 'typical' attributes of Latin American machista males: "the true macho [is not] afraid of anything, and he should be capable of drinking great quantities of liquor without necessarily getting drunk." Indeed, aggressiveness and hyper-sexuality, prominent characteristics of machismo, reflect an exaggerated cult of virility and masculine behaviour (see Chant, 1985b: 637; Giraldo, 1972).

Evelyn Stevens (1973) on the other hand, coined the term marianismo to address the woman's role in relation to the existing machismo concept. The marianismo concept, in her view, was associated with femininity which she traced back to Roman Catholic traditions. Her theory was based on readings from the 19th century, when many Latin American countries underwent forced Catholic teachings which included worship of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. This female character, endowed with semi-divine qualities, became the preferred role model for 'native' women across many conquered nations in Latin America. Self-denial, purity, abnegation, passivity and procreation thus became, in large measure, the determinants of Latin American women's self-respect. Combining the two features - marianismo/machismo - resulted in the currently existing gender stereotypes under which the male character is hard-drinking, promiscuous, easily angered, commanding and callous to all children and women, except his mother, to whom men (and women) are expected to profess a profound devotion (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993). In contrast, women under the marianismo ideology are valued for their reproductive capacities and ability to bear a great deal of suffering, for which they are attributed moral superiority (Cubbit, 1995:111).

By incorporating the marianismo concept in the already existing machismo, Stevens denoted the existence of 'equally balanced gender ideologies' which allocate women and men distinct roles both within and outside the household. This combination, she argued, ultimately allows both sexes the authority to reach the objectives that most fulfil them. By acquiring these powers, Stevens continued, women are encouraged and

placated into accepting male domination while, at the same time, women's nearly spiritual status elevates them in their children's eyes, such that they achieve their ultimate goal (Stevens, 1973).

Marianismo and machismo, both individually and as a dichotomy have, however, been challenged on many grounds. Concerning the machismo ideology, MacEwen Scott (1994:79) observed not only its ambiguity, "[although] the term [machismo] has acquired general currency throughout the Western world, ..its meaning is far from clear" but also its inaccuracy. Indeed, she maintained that despite machismo's value as an ideology with structural effects that undermine women's position in society, definitions given do not necessarily reflect actual current behaviour. Moreover, this is further elaborated by Gutmann's (1996) account of 'The Meanings of Macho' in which he disproves stereotypes of males based on machismo when specifically referring to Mexican males. He instead states that male (as well as female) identity does not remain static as it means different things to different people at different times. In fact, in his view, it can even mean many things for the same person at the same time (Gutmann, 1996:27).

Stevens' theory of marianismo has not been spared from criticism either. Bourque and Warren (1981) for example, stated that however much children venerate their mothers, women remain subordinate both within and outside the household. As they put it: "since no evidence is given that women have a material base for the *power* they exercise in the family, one is left wondering if standing as a symbol of the moral order actually gives women much concrete power or influence"(stress as in original) (Bourque and Warren, 1981:61). Moreover, critics have also argued that in this equation the only way a balance of power between the sexes can be maintained is through a clear segregation of the sexes: women being socialized both to avoid men and to avoid public visibility. This is the claim of Tracy Ehlers (1990) who re-evaluated Steven's work in her research in Guatemala. Her findings demonstrated that the balance of power across the sexes crumbled once males and females had to interact freely in the workplace and ^{at} in the home. In such cases, women's endless need and desire for abnegation and suffering would, at best, be an inadequate defence and, at worst, an open insult.

Finally, it is important to note that despite the many criticisms of the descriptive features of the marianismo-machismo dichotomy mentioned above, many of its

elements are still replicated across many countries under specific circumstances. Consequently, as will be shown throughout the thesis, they remain useful in explaining the differentiation of gender roles in Latin America. Indeed, studies have confirmed the utility of these concepts. Thus, a daughter's sexual conduct is still seen in many Latin American households as familial patrimony (Gutiérrez de Piñeda and Vila de Piñeda, 1992). The cult of motherhood remains a very important part of women's and men's lives (Bonilla, 1985:120-1; García and de Oliveira, 1994:195; Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993:89) and male misconduct, reflected in heavy drinking and violent behaviour, is frequently reported in research studies conducted among poor urban households (González² de la Rocha, 1994:142; Townsend², 1995:114).

Research on female paid employment and low-income urban Latin America has also confirmed some of the above-mentioned trends. Despite increasing numbers of low-income Mexican women having access to paid employment outside the home locally (Cubitt, 1995:118; Tiano, 1994:52), there is no doubt that according to the Mexican ideology, women's main role continues to be regarded as being inside the domestic unit. Sylvia Chant's (1991) Mexico-based study reveals that the widely-held belief that women should still have the primary responsibility for reproductive labour can translate into a real restriction in low-income women's access to paid employment outside the home even in cases of great economic need (1991:13). As Roldán (1988:230) confirms: "normative expectations concerning the interaction between husband and wife, and the pre-existing power imbalance between spouses might (and in many cases do) mediate between the wife's access to an independent income" (brackets as in original). The controversial effects of low-income urban Mexican women's access to paid employment on gender roles and relations at the household level are reflected in the reported cases where women have to ask their husbands or male kin for permission to work (de Leñero, 1969 cited in García and De Oliveira, 1994:210) and whilst some confront refusal (Reygadas et al., 1994:124; see also Roldán, 1988:239) others, despite being allowed to work, have to hand their wages over to their male partners (González², 1984 cited in González² de la Rocha, 1994). In fact, Tiano's northern Mexico-based study explains that women workers are oppressed "by the combined force of economic need and their submission to patriarchal relations in their households" (1994:53). In addition, studies have reported that low-income women's ability to freely spend their wages does not mean that they do not face some

disadvantages at the household level related to their access to paid employment. Mexican women who work, like many women in other countries in Latin America and worldwide, more often than not, face a doble jornada or double shift of work inside and outside the home. That is, upon completion of outside paid work, women go home only to have to work inside the household too (Chant, 1991:13-14; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:74; González⁷ de la Rocha, 1994:172 in Mexico; see also, Pérez Alemán, 1992:250; Safa, 1995b elsewhere in Latin America).

Bearing this in mind, studies have also reported that not all low-income women in Latin America and across the developing world in general, live with male partners who restrict their access to paid employment (see Chant, 1997; Vélez and Kaufmann, 1985 in Colombia). In fact, not all women live with adult males. And more interestingly, not all Latin American women comply with all of their male partners' wishes (García and de Oliveira, 1994:211 and 214; Roldán, 1988:243). As Scott (1986c:23) has put it: "Women.. have their own desires and strategies and, even in the context of a strongly upheld family and gender values, many of them assert their individuality"(see also Chant, 1991:14).

As the debate continues, an integral element that cuts across the analysis is age, understood both as a socially constructed and a biological phenomenon, which as well as gender, appears to play an important role in the lives of women workers inside the household unit.

Latin America: Prevalent Age Ideologies

In the same way that gender roles are, in many instances, regarded as absolute and unchangeable, so it is with age. In other words, ageing and old age, just like sexuality and sexual role⁸, in good part depend on the perceptions, beliefs, and feelings that people have about them which are not predestined, but belong in a historical and socio-cultural context (Contreras de Lehr, 1989:395; Wilson, 1995:98-9). As changing age stereotypes merge with changing gender conceptions, interesting patterns surface, locating women in different positions within as well as outside the household along their life course (Arber and Ginn, 1995:1). Notwithstanding this, whilst evidence has shown that certain characteristics are attached to women and men as they age, women's position within, as well as outside, the household remains lower than that of males along the life course. Latin America is by no means an exception.

Traditionally gender roles in Latin America have been depicted as shaped not only by broad macro-economic social, historical contexts but governed by clear-cut spatial and age-related rules (Mummert, 1994:194). For instance, research in urban Latin America that has focused on the 'old' has revealed that some features 'traditionally' attributed to the elderly, such as wisdom and centrality to their families, have progressively been eroded with increasing industrialisation (Dulcey Ruíz and Ardila, 1987 as cited in Dulcey Ruiz and Segura Barrios, 1989:283). Older Latin American women's vulnerability is further accentuated by their lack of employment opportunities and state support (Contreras de Lehr, 1989:394; Sennott-Miller, 1989). Indeed, when employed, they seem to be confined to the most poorly paid jobs in the informal sector of the economy (See Arizpe, 1977; Sennott Miller, 1989b).

Studies on middle-aged women with grown-up children, on the other hand, have revealed that as children grow, mature mothers are bound to experience an initial (re)gaining of freedom. Whilst this can be taken to mean freedom to engage in available paid employment, especially if financial difficulties are acute, research has shown that their incorporation in paid employment is not at all predictable. Although there is some evidence that low-income Latin American women are likely to be steadily employed as their children are no longer dependents (see Hernández Aguila, 1994; Stichter, 1990:24) in particular under conditions of great economic need (Chant, 1991:14), scholars, such as Scott, have suggested that "there [is] no clear correlation between labour market participation, marital status, number of children or stage in the life cycle" (Scott, 1990:212). Indeed, research has supported the view that not only do teenage children continue to make domestic demands on mature women (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993), but also that male partners in the household, if present, can affect the labour force participation of their wives or partners.

For low-income young mothers with young children, motherhood and direct male authority largely places their commitments around domestic duties. Whilst child rearing poses a constraint to low-income young mothers' incorporation into paid employment if there is no child care available, questions still emerge concerning young partnered mothers' patterns of labour force participation in times of great financial difficulties, in particular if job opportunities are available to them locally (Stichter, 1990:26). Attempts, however, have been made to explain it and male partners, more often than not, are included in the equation. As Tiano (1994:55) stated: "for partnered mothers, male

opposition to their employment often prevents them from taking jobs".³

Moving onto female youth, whilst the moment of a girl's first menstruation is regarded as a cause for celebration in Latin America, it is also maintained that it brings many restrictions to young girls, "for her virginity, while greatly prized, could by the same token occasion great personal danger" (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993:77). Seclusion in order to protect the family's honour seems to be the usual expected result. No longer girls, but señoritas (virgins), young women must remain indoors so as "to avoid the physical dangers of public space" (Townsend, 1995:87). Hard work inside (as well as outside) the households, however, appears to be a common experience among very young low-income girls in Latin America (Ennew, 1988). Moreover, whilst single childless younger women feel more at ease to join the labour force than their married counterparts (Benería and Roldán, 1987:90) and, in fact, cases are reported where parents encourage them to take up paid employment (Tiano, 1994:55 on maquilas in the Mexican border), in reality, evidence from the 1970s suggests that many younger women workers seemed to retain little control over their wages (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:57 and 174). Not surprisingly, studies report that many unmarried females might view marriage as an escape. On the other hand, available evidence on married females has demonstrated that initial experiences of marriage among young women, more often than not, reflect great seclusion, as husbands, in many instances, jealously monitor female newly-weds' movements (González^z de la Rocha, 1994:146; Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993:98).

Whilst it is clear that unequal burdens, excessive workloads and restrictive access to power and resources are distinctive features of the life course of many low-income women in Latin America, (and quite probably elsewhere in the world as well), intricate connections permeate our understanding of gender ideologies. Indeed, cross-cutting dimensions to gender inequalities and age-related roles and norms give way to constant re-definitions of gender roles and relations at the household level. Close consideration of the households in which women reside aid the understanding of female labour force participation along the life course of women.

Low-Income Mexico : Socio-Demographic Profile and Household Characteristics

The second area Chant (1991:13) identified as explanatory of women's incorporation into paid employment is socio-economic characteristics at the level of the

household (see also De Oliveira, et al., 1988; García, et al., 1982; Yanagisako, 1979 among many others).⁴ Existing literature that tackles the socio-economic characteristics of low-income northern Mexican households, in particular, where maquila women reside, will pave the ground for the introduction of the sample.

Decisive in considerations of low-income households and female labour force participation in Mexico is the interlock between households structure and members' stage in the life cycle. Chant's (1991) central Mexico-based findings developed this point further, and stated that not only is female employment related to household structure but that household structures change over time. In her words: "structure is a dynamic and fluid entity changing constantly over the course of the life cycle" (ibid.:131). Thus, in the same way that households change in form and structure over the life course as a result of internal and external pressures, so too do female members' patterns of labour force participation (Chant, 1997:12). The issue appears complex as many other factors enter into the equation. Thus, research has shown, for instance, that partnered women's incidences of employment are likely to be reduced when their households go through their nuclear phase (most likely in their early stages) and quite possibly will show high levels of economic participation among female heads of household (when households enter this stage, if at all), in particular if heads are sole breadwinners for dependent (or non-working) children living in the household (Chant, 1991; see also Gonzáles de la Rocha, 1994:79-102). Moreover, for adolescent daughters (either single or single mothers) living with their parents in male-extended households, their participation can also be high, provided paid employment is available to them and especially when parents rely on their wages (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a). Having said that, not even under the specific circumstances described above can neither the release of low-income women workers into paid employment, nor the socio-economic circumstances of households where women reside, be considered a predictable phenomenon.

When looking at the case of low-income older women in northern Mexico, evidence suggests that older women in the area tend to live either in nuclear households or in female-headed households. Concerning older women living in urban nuclear households, scholars have reported that households containing older females where former agricultural male workers are heads do not have great economic prospects, due to the reported levels of un- and underemployment among older males

in the region (Alarcón and McKinney, 1994:143; Reygadas *et al.*, 1994). For the case of older women in female-headed households evidence has suggested that heads of these households are bound to experience a pressing need to work, in particular when their children are either dependent or not working. Nonetheless, if children engage in income earning activities it is possible that the female household head withdraws from the labour force to work inside the household looking after grandchildren and/or as unpaid workers within the household (Reygadas *et al.*, 1994:103; see also Chant, 1991:125; Contreras de Lehr, 1989: 395 elsewhere in Mexico). With little access to the formal sector, research has reported that as low-income northern Mexican urban women grow older and adult working children depart from the household, their households, small in size, are bound to face great levels of poverty (see Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:51⁵; Reygadas, 1992⁶; Tiano, 1994:132⁷).⁸

Research on mature maquila workers in the northern Mexican border have reported a great variety of household arrangements, with great predominance of nuclear and female-headed households.

Concerning female-headed households containing mature women (usually separated, divorced, widowed, etc.), evidence has revealed that economic need may oblige them to remain in the labour force in order to contribute economically to their households (Reygadas, 1992:23-28; see also Chant 1991 in central Mexico). The same applies to mature women living in nuclear households who are bound to be incorporated into paid employment (mostly maquila jobs) and to remain in these jobs, even after pressing household financial difficulties were overcome (Reygadas, *et al.*, 1994:104). The situation appears no different for mothers with dependent children, for whom the insufficiency of male partners' wages in the northern Mexican border area does not allow mothers to remain in the household. Indeed, Tiano's data from Mexicali revealed that most partnered women with young children in nuclear households were found working despite the presence and contributions of male partners. These women, she reported "worked to help support dependent children" (Tiano, 1994:131).

Moving on to the case of younger northern Mexican women, research on their households has suggested that they either live in small newly formed nuclear households or in extended households. In the case of those younger maquila workers that leave the parental household to form their own nuclear household, evidence has demonstrated that they are bound to undergo serious financial difficulties. As Young

and Fort's (1994:659) study based on young maquila workers revealed: "households which.... are small [and] nuclear..... are extremely vulnerable [because] they can not increase the number of income earners". Regarding the economic situation of the young maquila workers in extended households, whilst some have found that young maquila women living in large extended households are in a better economic situation due to the greater number of workers released per household (Fernández-Kelly, 1983b: 54-56; Young and Christopherson, 1986; Young and Fort, 1994:664), other scholars instead found that the very fact that there were many young females able to work in the households gave female household members the opportunity to withdraw at times from the labour force, possibly to rest. This in turn, Cruz Piñero argues, makes the financial circumstances for these households not particularly better than other types of households locally (Cruz Piñero, 1994:34). Agreement however has been reached when considering the case of single mother maquila workers living in extended households as research has found that these maquila mothers are pressed financially both by the economic difficulties undergone in the parental household in which they live, and by the financial anxiety over their children's future (Reygadas, 1992:23-33).

To sum up, consideration of female labour force participation in maquilas in low-income urban northern Mexico along the life course of older women and women maquila workers and into the households reveals a complex interaction of households' structure and size with other factors such as individual and regional characteristics.

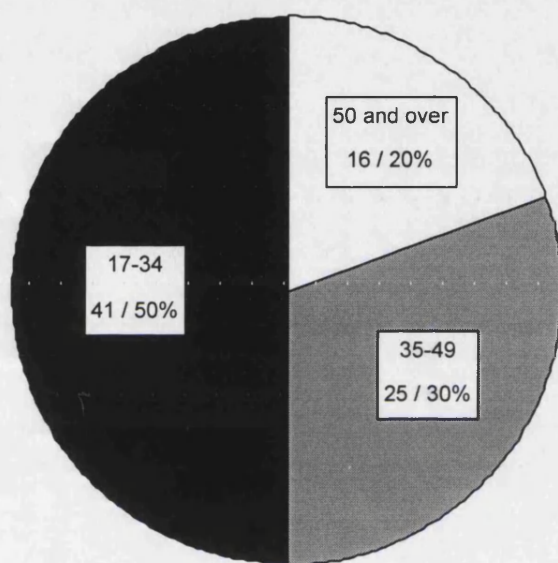
Three Generations: The Sample

To explore the intricate crosscut of age, gender and employment patterns, the present section draws on primary data which includes a questionnaire survey of 82 households in 25 low-income settlements located in the north, central and south areas of Juárez (see Annexes p.251-2).

Bearing this in mind, the chapter attempts to assess household and individual characteristics of the work force with particular, but not exclusive, reference to women maquila workers. It examines a range of factors (such as women's position in the household, education, migrant status, household size and structure) conventionally thought to have a major influence on the incorporation of females in paid employment (Chant, 1991). One of the main concerns of this section is to explore how these characteristics vary, not only across the identified age groups of women in the sample,

but also, how these relate to women maquila workers in relation to non-maquila workers. To this end, the full sample of 82 women living in poor settlements, will be divided into three distinct age cohorts. The first cohort, referred to hereafter as 'older women' or 'senior women', includes 16 women aged 50 and over (the average age for this cohort was 59 years). The next cohort, hereafter referred to as 'mature' women, includes 25 women aged between 35 and 49 (the average age for this cohort was 39).

Figure 4.1 Age Composition of the Sample



Source: Household Survey, Juarez, 1996

Finally, the last cohort, 'younger' women contains 41 women aged between 17 and 34 (the average age for this cohort was 28). The age composition of the sample was as follows: 20% was represented by older women; mature women comprised 30%, and the remaining 50% was represented by younger women (see Figure 4.1).

Male partners will also be included in the analysis but only as an extension to the examination of the age cohorts of women. Whilst not all women in the sample reported having a male partner, the great majority (69.5%, 57 out of 82) reported having a husband or partner in the household. Of those with male partners, 14% (or 8 out of 57) stated their partners were aged 50 and over; 32% (18) reported them as being aged between 35 and 49, and 54%, (31) reported having a partner aged between 17 and 34 years of age.

With regard to the geographical location of respondents in the low-income regions visited, proportions were not uniformly located across poor regions in Juárez. In fact, as eldest settlers were the primary basis for sample selection, a larger proportion of older women resided in older settlements (87.5% or 14 older women lived in northern settlements or those built before the 1960s) while a large proportion of younger women resided in younger settlements, that is those built after 1970, which were mostly located in the centre and south of the city (43.9% or 18 out of 41 women aged between 17 and 34 resided in the centre and 29.3% or 12 in the south).⁹ Given the difficulties of breaking the analysis down by settlement, aggregate data for the 25 settlements is presented for the three identified geographic regions.

General Occupational Patterns for Women and their Male Partners in the Sample

In order to place the three generations of women into context, the occupational analysis will include women (respondents) and their partners' employment characteristics. Information on male partners will be grouped according to the age cohorts identified for women and also according to occupational sector.¹⁰ In this way, the three identified age cohorts of women will be seen not only with respect to each other but also in relation to their male partners' occupational activity and age.

A disaggregated analysis of the figures, primarily by age, revealed a progressive decrease of maquila workers across older cohorts (both men and women). Whilst none of the cohort of older people in the sample reported working for maquilas at the time of the survey, this was not true of the younger cohorts, among whom 23% mature men and women and 33% of younger men and women reported working for maquilas at the time of the survey (see Table 4.1). *whilst bearing in mind the small and unrepresentative sample, there is a tendency for women's involvement in maquila work to decline with age.* ~~Thus, employment in maquilas was negatively correlated with respondents' age¹¹, i.e. more younger people worked for maquilas than older people.~~ *Thus,* Conversely, older and mature (healthy) respondents in the sample largely tended to work in the informal sector and the non-maquila formal sector.

Regarding the cohort of older respondents and their partners, the figures showed that whilst a considerable proportion of older men were reported to be working in the informal sector of the economy at the time of the survey (63%), 81% of older women reported being full-time housewives¹² (see Table 4.2). However, leaving older housewives and older sick men out of the calculation, it seems that the informal sector took a large number of older respondents (89% or 8 out of 9).

Table 4.1 Occupational Sector by Age (Joint Information on Respondents and their Partners)

SECTOR	OLDER COHORT (50 +))	MATURE COHORT (35-49)	YOUNGER COHORT (17-34)	TOTAL (All Ages)
INFORMAL SECTOR	8 (33%)	16 (37%)	19 (26%)	43 (31%)
FORMAL SECTOR (Maquila)	0	10 (23%)	24 (33%)	34 (24%)
FORMAL SECTOR (Non-Maquila)	1 (5%)	10 (23%)	8 (11%)	19 (14%)
*NOT EMPLOYED	0	0	5 (7%)	5 (4%)
<hr/>				
<u>Only Women</u> Housewives and/or Full-time unpaid workers within the household	13 (54%)	6 (14%)	16 (22%)	35 (25%)
<u>Only Men</u> Sick	2 (8%)	1 (2%)	0	3 (2%)
<hr/>				
TOTALS Actual Numbers	n = 24	n = 43	n = 72	n = 139

Notes:

Percentages in brackets () show sample distribution.

*Includes all those who considered themselves 'not currently employed'.

Source: Household Survey, Juárez, 1996

Table 4.2 Economic Sector by Gender and Age

ECONOMIC SECTOR	OLDER GROUP (50+)	MATURE GROUP (35-49)	YOUNGER GROUP (17-34)	TOTALS (All ages)
INFORMAL SECTOR				
-Males	5 (63%)	10 (56%)	11 (35%)	26 (46%)
-Females	3 (19%)	6 (24%)	8 (20%)	17 (21%)
FORMAL SECTOR MAQUILAS				
-Males	0	1 (6%)	13 (42%)	14 (25%)
-Females	0	9 (36%)	11 (27%)	20 (24%)
FORMAL SECTOR (NON-MAQUILAS)				
-Males	1 (12%)	6 (33%)	5 (16%)	12 (21%)
-Females	0	4 (16%)	3 (7%)	7 (8%)
NOT EMPLOYED				
-Males	0	0	2 (7%)	2 (3%)
-Females	0	0	3 (7%)	3 (4%)
HOUSEWIVES AND FULL-TIME WORKERS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD				
-Males	0	0	0	0
-Females	13 (81%)	6 (24%)	16 (39%)	35 (43%)
SICK/HANDICAP				
-Males	2 (25%)	1 (6%)	0	3 (5%)
Females	0	0	0	0
Males	n = 18	n = 18	n = 31	n = 57
Females	n = 16	n = 25	n = 41	n = 82
Totals	n = 34	n = 43	n = 72	n = 139

Note:

This table explores the employment patterns of respondents and their male partners into their households. Total Number of Households visited = 82.

Percentages in brackets () show sample distribution.

Source: Household Survey, Juárez, 1996.

Concerning the mature cohort (aged 35-49), male partners in this age group showed a consistency with the former male cohort in the informal sector (56% of mature males came close to the 63% reported for older men) (see Table 4.2). In addition, an interesting feature reported in the cohort of mature males was the increasing numbers of workers within the formal sector (non-maquila), something rare among their older male counterparts. From having one older male in the non-maquila formal sector of the economy, the figure in the next cohort of males (aged between 35 and 49) was 33% (or 6 out of 18). This leads one to deduce that it is likely that the mature males working for the (non-maquila) formal sector in the sample fulfilled the necessary educational requirements, something older males did not.¹³

Contrasting this picture, is the case of mature women whose employment patterns showed not only their full insertion into paid jobs when compared to older women in the sample, but their spread across the three identified economic sectors (i.e. formal maquila sector, formal non-maquila sector and the informal sector). Indeed, this group reported a marked reduction in the number of full-time non-paid workers within the household. From housewives, comprising 81% of older women, figures on housewifery in the sample dropped to 24% in the next cohort. Instead, mature women worked either in maquilas (36% or 9 out of 25), in the informal sector (24% or 6 out of 25) or in other formal sector jobs (16% or 4 out of 25).

When compared with their male counterparts within that age group, mature women revealed greater numbers of workers in the maquiladora sector than in the informal sector of the economy. Whilst the greatest number of mature working males in the sample were in the informal sector (56%), the greatest number of women in this age cohort (35-49) were engaged in the maquila sector, at 36%.

Moving on to the last age group of males in the sample (aged 17-34), a particular pattern surfaced, of the informal sector losing ground among the younger male population. Instead, large numbers of younger males worked in the maquila sector at the time of the interview. From high reported proportions of workers in the informal sector for the two previous cohorts of males (63% for older males and 56% for mature males) figures for younger males showed a decrease to 35% (or 11 out of the total 31). It seems as though the proportion of reported young male maquila workers in the sample was so high, that other formal sector jobs, those which had slightly picked up in the former cohort, lost weight among younger males. Indeed, leaving aside the cohort

of older males whose participation in non-maquilas was at 12% (or 1 out of 18), the figures on occupational activity for the non-maquila formal sector among mature and younger males revealed a decrease from 33% for mature males to 16% for younger males.

Concerning younger women, the figures showed a greater number being full-time unpaid workers within the household than in the former cohort (i.e. mature women). In fact, the number of unpaid workers inside the household (usually housewives) increased from 24% for mature women to 39% for younger women (or 16 out of 41). This figure, however, was closely followed by the cases of younger women who were maquila workers at the time of the survey (27% or 11 out of 41) and informal sector workers (20% or 8 out of 41).

Based on the reported figures, it appeared not only that some younger men and women had greater access to social security services through their own employment in the formal sector (mostly maquilas)¹⁴, but that within this pattern, young populations of men and mature women in the sample had greater access to social security services through their individual incorporation into the formal sector, either in maquila or non-maquila jobs at the time of the survey than the cohort of older males and females, but not more than the cohort of mature women.¹⁵ The high numbers of non-wage earners in the cohort of younger women reduced the possibility of them having access to social security through their own incorporation into paid employment. An interesting point about the cohort of younger females, however, is that three younger non-wage earners reported 'not being employed'. This category, 'not employed', was not reported among any other females within the household, who usually reported themselves as 'in the home' (*en la casa*) (see Table 4.2).

To sum up, figures from the sample on occupational segregation revealed resonance with some of the occupational patterns reported at the macro level as age and gender, plus social, economic and historical circumstances shaped local occupational patterns for the men and women in the sample. This was revealed in the employment patterns at the time of the survey, including the high incidence of informal sector workers among older males and the increasing numbers of young males and mature females in the maquila industry, both of which may possibly be explained by the conditions in the international economy such as increasing global competition among Transnational corporations and their subsequent search for cheap labour in countries

like Mexico, and gender and age stereotyping. An interesting point, however, was that despite the apparent employment opportunities for younger women locally (see Chapter Three) a large number of younger women in the sample were not engaged in paid employment at the time of the interview but were within the household. Release of workers into paid employment is further illuminated when looking at respondents' and their partners' work histories.

Work Histories.

Examination of employment patterns over the life course or else work histories (i.e. individuals' insertions and reinsertions in the labour market) in the case of women and their partners across the identified age cohorts in the sample revealed interesting patterns.

A close look at the case of older women and men in the sample revealed the importance of the informal sector to many of them as a means of subsistence throughout their lives. 44% (7 out of 16) older women (or else all older respondents in the sample with experience in paid employment) reported having resorted to the informal sector of the economy (i.e. home-based production and street selling) at some point in the 10-year period prior to the interview in order to make ends meet.¹⁶ Whilst their work histories revealed that these jobs were not done in a steady fashion, the informal sector appeared to allow them to move in and out of the labour market.

Concerning older males, 88% (7 out of 8) had also derived an income from this sector throughout much of their urban working lives. Suffice it to say, however, that the occupational marginality of older males and females was evident, in particular for the cohort of older females.¹⁷ The case of mature women in the sample, on the other hand, showed that their work histories were largely shaped by their employment in maquilas. This became clear as the figures for jobs held at the time of the survey did not reflect the large number of mature women with maquila work experience. Whilst 36% (or 9 out of 25) of mature women were maquila workers at the time of the survey, 72% (or 18 out of 25) had previous experience as maquila workers. This figure contrasts with the case of mature men. Of the total mature men in the sample only two had maquila work experience (including the case of the male who was a maquila worker at the time of the survey). Another fact that emerged when comparing the reported work histories of mature men and mature women was the high number of insertions and re-insertions into

the labour market registered among mature women with maquila work experience, something not seen among mature men or indeed among women without maquila work experience. Of the total 18 mature women who reported having maquila work experience at the time of the survey, 50% (9 out of 18) registered between 6 and 10 insertions and re-insertions in the labour market in the 10-year-period prior to the household survey.¹⁸ In fact, only one mature maquila woman reported having worked for 19 years for the same maquila without stopping, since her initial entry into the sector. Conversely, of the total 7 mature women without maquila work experience at the time of the survey, 86% (6 out of 7) registered having held the same job for the greater part of the 10 years prior to the time of the interview (4 in the informal sector and two in the non-maquila formal sector of the economy).

The employment patterns of mature maquila women along their life course is also a matter to consider. Of the total 18 mature women with maquila work experience, 67% (12 out of 18) reported work histories of the type “household-maquila-household-maquila-household.....”.¹⁹ That is, more than half of the women with maquila work experience in this age group alternated maquila employment with periods of withdrawal into their households. The remaining six (out of 18 mature maquila women) whose work histories deviated from the pattern “maquila-household-maquila-household” included the case of a worker who had remained in the maquila sector for 19 consecutive years, 3 mature maquila women who sporadically combined the maquila-household pattern with the informal sector and two women who, although they started in the maquila sector, later joined the formal non-maquila sector permanently. It must be noted that of the total women who showed the pattern ‘maquila-household-maquila-household’ there were cases of mature maquila women who started their maquila employment histories later in life after long periods of housewifery. In fact, one mature maquila woman reported having started her employment history in the informal sector and once she joined the maquila sector, she showed the employment pattern maquila-household-maquila-household. Finally, from the group of mature women who alternated some periods of work on the line and some in their households, 50% (6 out of 12) mentioned having worked for more than four different maquilas locally in the 10 years prior to the time of the interview. In contrast, of the total non-maquila mature women, 57% (4 out of 7) revealed having always been workers in the informal sector and one always worked in the formal non-maquila sector.²⁰ So, according to these data, it seems that the pattern

of insertion and reinsertion in the labour market was not characteristic of employment histories of non-maquila mature women in the sample.

The occupational situation for younger men and women in the sample appeared to be very similar to that reported for the previous cohort, especially women, as younger women's work histories were also largely shaped by their insertion in maquila employment. Whilst 27% (11 out of 41) of younger women were maquila workers at the time of the survey, 82% in total (34 out of 41) had some form of maquila work experience at the time of the interview (including women who were maquila workers at the time of the interview) and of those younger women with experience in maquilas, 76% (26 out of 34) combined periods of work in maquilas with occasional withdrawals from the maquila sector to enter into the household. Thus, the decrease in younger women's figures among the economically active population at the time of the survey (and the increments in women workers within the household for the younger cohort) described above, shows a tendency for younger women to move out of the maquila sector to the household, possibly with a view to returning to the maquila work force later. It should be noted however that of the total 8 younger maquila workers who did not follow the maquila-household work history pattern, 4 had, at some point, worked in the informal sector.²¹ Concerning non-maquila younger women, 2 out of 7 had always been housewives and 4 out of 7 had always worked for the informal sector. In other words, just as observed with mature women, younger non-maquila workers in the sample did not seem to share the pattern of insertion and reinsertion into households, that maquila workers did.

Another notable feature of younger females with maquila work experience was not only their multiple insertions into maquilas reported in the five years prior to the interview but the number of maquilas they had worked for. Of the total 34 younger women who reported some maquila work experience, 50% (17 out of 34) had worked for more than 2 maquilas in the 5-year period prior to the interview (and of those, 5 had worked for more than 5 different maquilas in the same period of time) and 41% (14 out of 34) reported more than 6 insertions and re-insertions in the five year period prior to the time of the interview. Whilst the figures show a tendency for younger women to have more insertions and re-insertions in maquila jobs than mature maquila respondents, attention should be paid to the fact that younger workers may have remembered more clearly the number of re-insertions in the five-year-period prior to the time of the

interview, than their mature counterparts whose work histories tended to be longer. Having said that, younger workers' greater number of insertions and re-insertions in maquilas might be related to life course factors and/or household constraints specific to younger workers, as the thesis will demonstrate.²²

Younger male maquila workers, on the other hand, showed different employment patterns. Whilst their employment trends were far from steady, their trajectories revealed less insertions and re-insertions in the labour market than those seen among younger women. Of the total males with maquila work experience (31), only one was registered as having worked for more than 3 maquilas in the five-year period prior to the household survey. Another characteristic of young male trajectories in the sample is men's insertions into other branches of the economy, including maquila employment, something less clear among their female counterparts. Indeed, of the total male partners with maquila work experience, 39% (12 out of 31) had stepped in and out of the formal (non-maquila) and informal sector of the economy in the five years prior to the interview, with fewer reported withdrawals, if any at all, into the household.²³ When considering the case of younger non-maquila men, of those who reported working in the informal sector of the economy at the time of the interview, 69% (9 out of 13) had held the same job throughout the five-year-period prior to the interview. Similarly, 4 out of 5 male workers in the non-maquila formal sector had not changed jobs in the same period of time.

The main conclusion to be drawn from the analysis of female employment patterns in the household survey is that older women comprised a particular group with no access to formal sector jobs locally. This, in first instance, confirms the predictions established by Marginalisation Thesis adherents and disconfirms those espoused by Exploitation Thesis proponents. Indeed, the marginal circumstances of older respondents in the sample indicates that capitalist industrialisation, excludes and isolates older women from productive roles. In contrast, the diversity of occupational activities reported among mature women, leads one to believe that this group had greater access to economic activities outside the household and even outside the orbit of the maquila industry. Using the selected theories, it can be argued that older women appeared as Marginalised from the maquila sector of employment. The advent of assembly industries in Juárez then restricted older women's employment opportunities when compared to mature and younger respondents, as older women were confined

to the household or to the informal sector of the economy. From that viewpoint, the arrival of maquilas in Juárez included some mature and younger women in the formal sector of the economy. The question whether younger and mature women were either exploited or integrated appears complex as ironically, whilst younger women could have had great employment opportunities locally, at least in comparison with older women, a large number of younger respondents in the sample seemed to have withdrawn from the labour market and remained in their households at the time of the survey. Having said that, data on respondents' work histories revealed that many mature and younger respondents had previously worked in the maquila sector. Moreover, within this group of respondents with maquila work experience, a rather large sub-group of mature and younger workers combined periods of work on the line as maquila workers with periods within the home, something not reported among non-maquila women. This situation poses the following questions. Are these women being exploited doubly as workers on the line and as women in their households? Or are they integrated and whilst deriving an income of their own they reap the scarce benefits of being maquila workers and withdraw from the sector occasionally to fulfil their roles as daughters, wives and mothers? Whilst the question so far remains unresolved, it is clear that women's patterns of labour force participation are defined by a clear gender and age differentiation. Indeed, the data indicated that women's experiences of maquila employment were considerably different to those of male partners in the sample.

Finally, given that the great majority of workers with maquila work experience shared a pattern of labour characterised by sporadic insertions in the maquila labour market, throughout this thesis, the terms 'maquila worker(s)' and/or 'maquila women' will be used to encompass both women who were maquila workers at the time of the survey and/or women who reported having had work experience in maquilas prior to the interview, regardless of their occupation when interviewed. Conversely, the term 'women non-maquila workers' or 'non-maquila women' will encompass women who reported not having had work experience in the maquila sector at the time of the interview. In cases where I specifically refer to the case of women who were maquila workers at the time of the interview, I shall clearly state this in the text.

Earning Differences Between Males and Females in the Sample

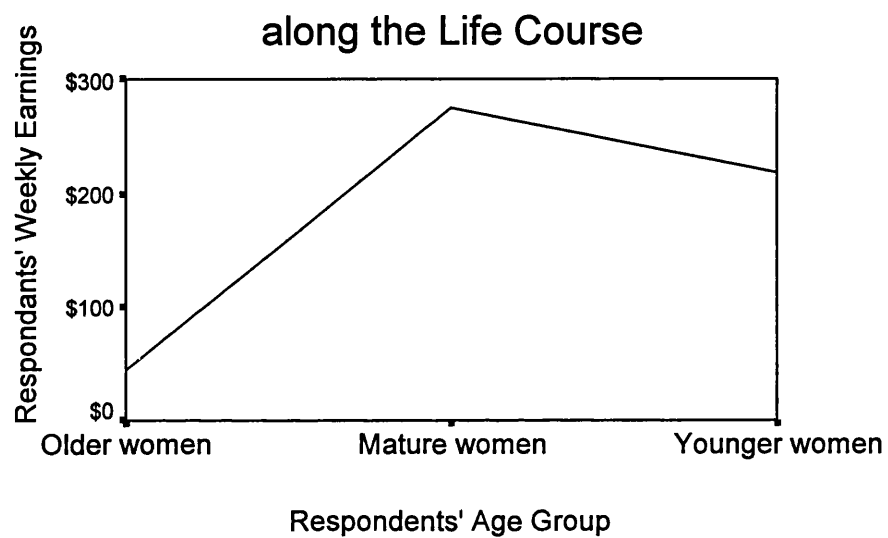
A close examination of average earnings at the time of the survey by gender

showed not only that most male earnings were markedly higher than those of women but that younger and mature women's average weekly earnings were higher than those of older women and older male partners in the sample.²⁴ Whilst the difference in average weekly earnings between men and women in the sample was highly marked (the mean average weekly wages for male partners, n=57 was \$429, and the average for women, n=82 was \$202), both cohorts (males and females) showed great dispersion of wages across ages and across and even within economic sectors.²⁵ A comparative analysis of women's earnings across age cohorts and economic activities and female maquila workers within, elucidates wage differentials.

Bearing in mind that the average income for the total sample of women maquila and non-maquila was \$202 (which coincidentally is the same as the local minimum wage), it is striking to see that almost all older women earned under this average (94% or 15 out of 16). This percentage of older women (94%), however included a high number of housewives (n=13). Nonetheless, even when leaving out the case of housewives from the calculation, older women appeared to be a very low-paid sub-group.^(see figure 4.2)²⁶ When doing the same exercise for the case of mature women, 24% (6 out of 25) reported very low earnings (under \$150 weekly) and only 2 (8%) were close to the full sample's weekly average earnings (\$202). These findings suggest that mature respondents, as they move along the life cycle might head towards the category of very low paid workers, resembling older women in the sample and moving away from the better paid category found among younger women. In contrast, when selecting those younger workers with earnings under the average wage, or else the lowest paid younger workers in the sample, it became clear that these women appeared closer to the average earnings (oscillating between \$172 and \$200 weekly) than older women. In fact, of the 8 lowest paid younger workers (19.5 % of the total group of younger women) none reported earnings below \$150 weekly, something reported among senior women in the sample.

The findings on wage differentials indicate that the economic activities available for younger working women in the sample were better paid than those available for older women. If this suggestion is valid, it remains unclear why there are large numbers of younger women within the household. That is, if younger women have access to better paid jobs why do large numbers of them remain within the household? It may be that younger women who did not work (or who did not work in very low-paid jobs) did so

Figure 4.2 Respondents' Earning Differences



Note: The simbol '\$' denotes Mexican pesos

Source: Household Survey, Juarez, 1996

because they could afford not to work. Alternatively, it could be that despite economic need, domestic responsibilities constrained younger women from engaging in any type of paid employment locally, or that male partners did not allow them to work, or indeed, any combination of the above-mentioned factors as this thesis will demonstrate.

Beyond an analysis of low-paid subgroups of workers across age cohorts, an examination of women's mean earnings per age cohort and per economic activities revealed that whilst informal sector jobs contained great divergences in earnings within, especially due to the higher wages earned by younger sex workers and the very low wages derived from older street sellers in the sample²⁷, wages derived from the maquiladora sector appeared to contain the least variation among the registered activities in the formal and informal sector of the economy and across age cohorts.²⁸ Having said that, whilst most maquila wages were neither the lowest nor the highest in the sample (see Table 4.3), they did not surpass the wages qualified workers in the non-maquila formal sector reported. Indeed, non-maquila formal sector jobs whilst also a middle-of-the-road option, less profitable than the average income derived by some workers in the informal sector, but considerably more profitable than the mean of maquila wages, also showed divergencies within. This was, in particular, the case for qualified respondents with access to better-paid non-maquila jobs (such as a local research institute's secretary, a semi-qualified clerk or a primary school teacher) who, on average, reported higher earnings than those offered by jobs in the maquiladora sector. However, those respondents in the non-maquila formal sector with fewer qualifications may not have surpassed the maquila wages for secretaries. Finally, access to social security services also comes into the equation. At this point it becomes clear that whilst qualified non-maquila formal sector workers had access to governmentally-mandated social security services, none of these jobs provided the additional benefits provided by large maquilas locally (such as access to private transport facilities, occasional child care in the maquila premises, canteens inside the workplace and extra-payments for attendance, punctuality, production targets, etc.).

All in all, older women presented a striking scene of poverty in terms of their individual earnings. Younger and mature paid workers, even those with lower incomes, mostly earned more than the low wages seen among senior women in the sample.

Households

In terms of the composition of households in the sample as a whole, nuclear households were the most common form of household unit (46%, 38 out of 82) followed by extended households (male-headed) (20%, 16 out of 82), female-headed households (15%, 12 out of 82, 9 de jure and 3 de facto) and female-extended households (12%, 10 out of 82).²⁹ Leaving aside the cases of single person households (3), 68% (54 out of 79) were male-headed and 32% (25 out of 79) were woman-headed. Differences in household structure across generations were also evident as a good number of older women in the sample lived in female-headed households (38%, 6 out of 16), which was not the case for younger or mature women in the sample where nuclear households were the most common form (44% or 11 out of 25 mature women and 56% or 23 out of 41 younger women).³⁰

Maquila Households: Female Labour Force Participation Along the Life Course

The most commonly reported household types among maquila workers in the sample were nuclear (54% or 28 out of 52) followed by extended households (21% or 11 out of 52).³¹ Non-maquila women whilst showing greater diversity of household types, also revealed a greater predominance of nuclear households at 37% (11 out of 30) followed by female-headed households (23% or 7 out of 30).³² Whilst nuclear households will be given greater importance in this thesis due to their predominance not only among maquila but also among non-maquila workers, a close look at how maquila employment relates to households structure across age cohorts elucidates the sample trends further.

Older Women

A primary exploration of the most recurrent types of households where older women, all non-maquila workers, were found revealed that most senior women in the sample lived in female-headed households (37%, 6 out of 16), followed by those living in nuclear households (25%, 4 out of 16).³³ Older women in female-headed households combined the informal sector as a means of making an income with full-time non-paid work within the household. Two senior women in female-headed households reported

Table 4.3 Women's Weekly Wages by Economic Activity

	No Earnings	(\$1-\$150)	(\$151-\$400)	(\$401-\$700)	(\$701-\$2,000)
INFORMAL SECTOR					
Domestic Servant n=6	0	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	0
Waitress/Cook n=1	0	0	1 (100%)	0	0
Home-based Commerce n=1	0	1 (100%)	0	0	0
Street Seller n=2	0	2 (100%)	0	0	0
Sex Worker n=8	0	0	2 (25%)	3 (37%)	3 (37%)
FORMAL SECTOR					
NON- MAQUILA					
Teacher n=1	0	0	0	1 (100%)	0
Secretary n=2	0	1 (50%)	0	1 (50%)	0
Clerk n=3	0	0	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	0
-MAQUILA n=20	0	3 (15%)	16 (80%)	1 (5%)	0

Notes

Figures on non-employed respondents (n=3) and full-time unpaid workers within the household

(n=35) were left out of this table. The symbol '\$' denotes Mexican pesos.

Given that the sample size is of less than a hundred, percentages in brackets denote sample distribution.

Source: Household Survey, Juárez, 1996.

being paid workers at the time of the survey and 4 were full-time non-paid workers within the household. As mentioned earlier, none of the women in this age cohort had work experience as maquiladora workers. Instead, their employment patterns were largely shaped by their sporadic (2 cases) or permanent (3) entrances into the informal sector of the economy (domestic service, home-based production activities and/or home-based commerce). The fact that their households were small in size, with few workers contributing to the household income pool (of the total 6 households in this category, 3 contained 1 or 2 paid workers and 2 contained none at the time of the survey) made these households economically vulnerable. Older women's reported occasional incorporation in the informal sector may have constituted their attempt to economically provide for their households in times of great financial difficulties.³⁴ Indeed, women in this category who did not, or could not, work (due to health-related problems, 2 out of 6) at the time of the survey manifested being heavily reliant on their children's monetary and food contributions. Finally, of the total 6 senior women in female-headed households, three had access to social security services through the active incorporation of their grown children in the formal sector of the economy.³⁵

Concerning older women in nuclear households (4), these households contained a full-time housewife and an older male partner, usually working in the informal sector, and residing with one or two paid workers at the time of the survey. A point to highlight about older women's occupational activities in nuclear households, regards the fact that many of them occasionally resorted to home-based production activities in order to make ends meet. This said, a partner's demands, and her own or her partner's deteriorating health, constrained older women's engagement in the few jobs available to them (mostly domestic service, street selling, home-based production). These factors, combined with the instability of weekly earnings for them and for their working partners in the informal sector (if he worked) obliged many to rely on contributions in kind by grown up children. Children's departure combined with lack of access to employment in the formal sector to make these households economically vulnerable if any unforeseen event occurred (mostly health-related economic expenses). In fact, only one older respondent in this group reported having access to social security services through a daughter's incorporation in the formal maquila sector.³⁶

The commonality of experiences revealed by older women's households stemmed from the reported constraints they faced when attempting to engage in

permanent paid employment. For this reason, most older women appeared to rely on adult working children, especially if they worked in the formal sector and lived in the household as it gave the respondent access to social security services. As such older women were marginalised from the expanding maquila sector and the associated benefits such as access to social security services through their own incorporation into the formal sector of the economy.

Mature Women

Concerning mature respondents, the largest number of them were found living in nuclear households (44%, 11 out of 25) followed by those living in female-headed households and extended households in equal proportions, that is 20% each (5 mature women lived in female-headed households and 5 lived in extended households). Finally, 3 mature women lived in female-extended households.³⁷ Proportions were held at similar rates for maquila workers in this cohort. Mature maquila workers' most recurrent form of households included nuclear households (at 50% or 9 out of 18) followed by female-headed and male-extended households in equal numbers (that is, 22% or 4 out of 18 each).

A close examination of the nuclear households containing mature maquila women (81% or 9 out of 11) showed that 5 were composed of a female who occasionally withdrew from the maquila sector into the household with an employment pattern of the type "maquila-household-maquila-household" and a male partner engaged in the informal sector.³⁸ As a result, respondents in these households and their partners, on the whole showed high access to social security services. The non-maquila households, on the other hand, had secured a fixed income and access to social security for dependent children (if in the household) through either partner's incorporation in non-maquila formal sector jobs. Less secure, however, were those non-maquila mature respondents in nuclear households who, whilst reporting access to social services through the incorporation of another worker (an adult child) in the formal sector did not have access to an income themselves (this was the case in 2 households as the children worked for maquilas). In general, an interesting feature of these households is the economic cushion provided by several household members' reported access to paid employment.

The financial scenario for mature women who belonged to female-headed

households (5), appeared slightly different as their engagement in paid employment, appeared to be a compulsory requirement in the face of accentuated financial difficulties. Indeed, of the 5 households in this category, 4 held 1 or 2 workers only and one, none. Finally, of the 5 respondents in this age cohort who reported living in these households, only 2 had ensured access to social security through their own employment (one in the non-maquila formal sector and the other through her employment in maquilas).

Mature women who lived in extended households showed high participation in paid employment. Four out of five respondents in this type of household were working outside the household at the time of the survey. An interesting point about these households was that 4 out of 5 also had at least one worker in the maquila sector which, in turn, ensured the provision of social services for non-working parents (if in the home) and the worker's dependent children. On the other hand, only 2 out of 6 informal sector mature workers were reported who, through their adult children's incorporation in the maquila formal sector, ensured their own access to social security. In short, extended households in the sample holding mature respondents released most workers into the maquila sector, and only very few into the informal sector.³⁹

To sum up, whilst a common feature of mature respondents' households (maquila and non-maquila workers) was that they tended to live in households with adult working children, mature maquila women in nuclear, extended and female-headed households were in the position where they themselves worked to provide their households not only with a steady income but also with access to social security services, something mature non-maquila women occasionally had access to if they worked for the non-maquila formal sector but more often through their children's incorporation in the formal sector of employment locally (usually maquilas). However, mature maquila respondents living in female-headed households appeared to be in a less promising situation as their households did not have as many workers as those respondents living in extended households. From this, it can be suggested that mature women living in larger households with several adults working may be in a position to withdraw several times from the labour market to the household, possibly to rest or to undertake domestic responsibilities placed on them, provided their maquila wages and associated benefits derived from the sector were not the only or main source of income for the household.

It is in this way that mature maquila workers in the sample can be regarded as Integrated via the social security system that allow them access to health services and mature non-maquila workers can be said to have been Marginalised.

Younger Women

The majority of younger women were found living in nuclear households (56%, 23 out of 41), followed by extended households (22%, 9 out of 41) and by female-extended households (15%, 6 out of 41). Within these patterns, maquila workers' most recurrent household forms included nuclear households (at 56% or 19 out of 34), and extended households (21% or 7 out of 34).⁴⁰

Nuclear households with younger women, showed similar patterns to those seen with mature maquila women. It should be noted, however, that younger respondents in general (maquila and non-maquila) appeared directly constrained by household factors to enter paid employment. Reasons included not only a high number of dependent children in the household but also lack of child care and the presence of male partners which may have prevented younger women from working in the available jobs in the formal sector (maquilas or non-maquilas) or the informal sector. Ironically, the presence of dependent children may also make access to social services imperative. The growing need for fixed wages and access to social security may, in turn, explain the large numbers of male partners in the formal sector (mostly maquilas); and the tension arising from the need for a second income in the formal sector (fixed wages and extra payments) and close care for the children in the home may explain young maquila respondents' continuous insertions and re-insertions in the maquila formal sector. Indeed, of the total 23 nuclear households reported among younger women in the cohort, 16 (70%) had access to social security services and to fixed wages through the incorporation of either partner in the formal sector at the time of the interview (maquila or non-maquila). In other words, seven nuclear households in this cohort did not have access to social security services at all. These seven households, however, deserve careful consideration as, all (7) had, at least one child under the age of six, and no-one who could help out the respondent at home.⁴¹ Having said this, of those 7, 2 had a male partner engaged in the informal sector in El Paso who derived earnings in dollars. Whilst it is likely that these two younger women did not have the latent economic need to work in maquilas that they did before marriage (before marriage they showed a

trajectory of the type “maquila-household-maquila-household”), it is likely that the other 5 respondents’ need for access to social security services (in particular health care for the children) and wages will soon push them into paid employment (possibly maquilas). Based on this evidence it is possible to suggest that younger maquila women with children living in small nuclear households can be said to be Exploited clearly seen in the double yoke of oppression they confront as mothers and as workers. However, their situation resembles that of younger women living in extended households as daughters and single mothers as we shall see next.

Indeed, in the case of younger maquila women in extended households in the sample (9), it appears that younger respondents’ financial situation in these households was very precarious. Whilst this group of women had great access to maquila jobs locally (7 out of 9 were maquila workers), their conditions as young mothers (as most were) constrained them in holding down work outside the household. However, of the total extended households holding young maquila respondents, 6 out of 7 respondents registered being wage earners at the time of the survey and of those half worked for maquilas at the time of the interview (4 out of 7). This said, the remaining 3 mentioned being restricted from working not only due to the presence of young dependent children and lack of child care⁴² but also due to advanced pregnancies. All in all, it seems that as members of extended households and as single mothers, younger women did not see a promising scenario. Whilst seemingly contradictory, the situation of younger women in extended households did not resemble the situation of mature women in extended households. The main reason appears to be the fact that whilst mature women in extended households lived with adolescent working children, younger women in extended households, as workers in their late twenties and early thirties, faced not only their siblings’ departure from the parental household, their parents’ old age and difficulty in holding down employment, but also the presence of their own young offspring and the financial strain as a result, something mature maquila women had possibly faced as daughters before moving out of the parental household. In other words, mature maquila women were in a different stage in their domestic cycle when compared to young maquila workers in extended households.

To sum up, the most visible advantage for households holding at least one maquila worker is the access it gives to social security services to meet health needs.⁴³ It is in that respect that the access that maquilas’ employment give to women workers

to social security services can be said to Integrate them. The issue proves more complex as more specific findings in this area suggest that as women move along the life course they show various degrees of Integration or of Exploitation. Mature maquila women in extended households, for instance proved to be in a better situation as members of households where adult children were paid workers. This group showed better financial prospects than older women or than younger (maquila or non-maquila) women in extended or nuclear households or than mature (maquila and non-maquila) respondents in nuclear households. Concerning mature maquila women in nuclear households, they can be said to be Integrated in a different way as they shared, consciously or unconsciously, an apparent strategic employment pattern where male and female members tried to supply their households with both fixed (if low) wages and access to social security provided by the formal sector (through the respondent's incorporation in maquila jobs) and cash earnings derived from the informal sector of the economy (male partners).

Conversely, the situation of younger women in general (maquila and non-maquila) appeared rather different. This was due to domestic constraints such as pregnancies or the presence of dependent children and no child care which restricted the woman's possibilities to engage in paid employment. Moreover, their situation as daughters may have restricted their financial prospects. For the young maquila women, gains as a result of their access to social security services may have seemed rather obscured by their precarious circumstances as daughters, single mothers and providers in their parental households. It is in this sense that younger maquila women may be regarded as Exploited rather than Integrated through their access to maquila jobs. An interesting case however is posed by those younger non-maquila women working for the non-maquila formal sector. Undoubtedly, there are degrees of Integration and of Exploitation and more importantly the life course permeates the analysis of female maquila respondents' access to industrial employment.

Households' Incomes along the Life Course

Bearing in mind that \$534^{Mexican pesos per week} was the mean of household incomes for the whole sample, this section will look at the average mean of incomes across households and age cohorts. On the whole, data confirmed the trends described above. Whilst older and many younger maquila women appeared to be having serious financial difficulties in the

households to which they belonged at the time of the interview, mature women showed better financial prospects.

A primary look at nuclear households across age cohorts revealed that whilst nuclear households where there were older women reported average household incomes of \$290 per week, younger and mature women had much higher household income earnings. Indeed, mature and younger women in nuclear households reported household incomes of the order of \$526 and \$697 respectively. An interesting point is that the number of members in nuclear households did not increase across age cohorts. In fact, the number of household members for older women living in nuclear households in the sample was similar to the figure reported for younger women. Whilst older women in nuclear households registered 3.7 members on average, and mature women reported 4.7, younger women registered 4.17 members. A point to make about younger women in nuclear households, however, is that they did not seem to have many more workers than nuclear households containing older women. Indeed, whilst older women in nuclear households reported, on average, 1.2 workers, mature women reported 2.72 workers and younger women 1.3 workers.

A closer look at the cases of young nuclear households with maquila workers where the two young partners worked for maquilas (6 cases) showed average household incomes of \$434 weekly, lower than the figure reported by the average nuclear household in the sample (\$534). Moreover, removing the top figures, the case of a younger nuclear household which reported earnings from maquilas of \$700 (both as line supervisors), and the case of a male partner reported as a line supervisor who derived an income of \$900 weekly, makes the average for the remainder households drop to \$300 weekly, close to the average household income reported among older women in nuclear households in the sample (\$290). In other words, younger maquila respondents in the sample who lived in small, nuclear households reported very low average income earnings with two exceptions, where either, or both partners held positions at supervisory level.⁴⁴

Moving on to female-headed households, the average mean of incomes was \$289. The average number of members in these households was 3.9. and only 1.3 members, on average, were wage earners at the time of the survey. When considering female-headed household incomes across age cohorts, it becomes clear that the most pressed economically were the younger women. Whilst senior women had average

household incomes of \$230 per week, and mature women had average household incomes of \$377, the highest of this group, younger women had average household incomes of just \$200 per week.

This trend is possibly explained by life course and employment factors. Just as older women living in female-headed households may be experiencing children's departure coupled with their own impediments to work, younger women too may be experiencing not only their mothers' inability to work (who were most likely aged 50 or over), but also their brothers' and sisters' departure and growing demands being made on them as a result. On the other hand, mature women may not only have been able to re-enter paid employment themselves but may also have had young adult children, who are likely to be wage earners, still living in the household and probably, if not actively contributing to the household income pool, not making monetary demands on the mother. When looking at the average number of household members and the average number of workers in these households, patterns become clearer. Whilst older women in female-headed households in the sample showed that they lived in households with, on average, 3.7 household members, mature women had 4.4 members. In contrast, younger women living in female-headed households in the sample reported 3 members, on average, per household. Concerning the numbers of paid workers in the household, whilst older respondents in female-headed households showed, on average, 1.16 workers, and mature women, 1.6 workers, younger women reported one worker per household, on average. In other words, paid workers are lowest among young women living in female-headed households, peak in mature women's and decline again in older women's households.⁴⁵

Moving on to male-extended households, these households showed not only one of the largest average household incomes in the sample (\$611), but also higher numbers of household members (6.18 on average for the whole cohort of male-extended households) than those reported for other household structures. When looking at number of workers, the figures showed that, on average, extended households had 2.9 wage earners at the time of the survey with 0.5 being the number of dependent children. The small figure for dependent children may explain the increasing number of adult members working at the time of the survey.

A close look at the trends across age cohorts for male-extended households elucidates these patterns. Whilst older women had the lowest average household

income, mature women had the highest in extended households (older women in extended households in the sample at the time of the survey reported household incomes of around \$225 and mature women around \$773 per week). On the other hand, younger women appeared in between, approximating mature women's as their household incomes were around \$607 per week. Concerning number of household members, older women living in extended households at the time of the survey had, on average, 5 household members, while mature women reported 5.6 household members and younger women 6.7. The trend is further explained by looking at the average number of wage earners in extended households in the sample across age cohorts as mature women had more active workers at the time of the survey than older or younger women (older women had, on average, 1.5 workers at the time of the survey and 5 household members; mature women reported, on average, 3 workers per extended household at the time of the survey and 5.6 household members; and finally younger women had 3.2 workers and 6.7 members at the time of the survey. Again, these trends may reveal that older women have to rely economically on their children's contributions to the household, but also, that better employment opportunities in the formal and informal sector, may have put mature women living in male-extended households in a better financial position than any other group. Younger women did not seem to be in a very favourable economic situation in these households. When observing the number of dependent children across cohorts it becomes clear that younger women in extended households had more dependent children than their older counterparts (neither older nor mature women had dependent children at the time of the interview in extended households in the sample whereas younger women had 0.88 on average).⁴⁶

This section has explored average household incomes across household types and age cohorts. Analysis of household incomes has revealed improved financial circumstances for mature women when compared to older and/or younger women in the sample. When taking into account the information provided for maquila workers in earlier sections, it seems that not all households where maquila workers resided were economically secure. Younger and mature workers' access to maquila jobs combined with their stage in the life and domestic cycle may have put them in varying financial circumstances. Once again this section highlighted how stage in the life cycle permeates the analysis of whether women maquila workers are Integrated or Exploited.

Individual Characteristics : Three Generations of Women

The third area Chant (1991) identified as being explanatory of women's incorporation into paid employment is individual characteristics.

When looking at individual characteristics across the three cohorts of women, suffice it to say that interconnections between maquila employment and individual characteristics were far clearer in the case of mature (maquila and non-maquila) women than among younger respondents (maquila and non-maquila). However, when comparing fertility levels and educational attainment for mature and younger maquila women with respect to those for older respondents or non-maquila women, trends became apparent.

Concerning the position of the woman in the household, whilst all older women were 'the woman of the house', their marital status at the time of the interview showed great diversity. Whilst 50% of the respondents reported being married at the time of the interview, the remainder were either separated or had been abandoned (31.3% or 5 out of 16), widowed (12.5% or 2 out of 16) or single mothers (6.3% or 1 out of 16). In addition, all women had children; four reported having between 1 and 4 children, while 12 reported between 5 and 13 children. All women in this group were migrants (5 or 31.3% reported being rural migrants), and 50% (8) had primary education or less schooling years than that (12.5% or 2 did not attend school at all, and 31.3% or 5 completed primary school).⁴⁷

Conversations with older respondents revealed that their arrival in Juárez was mostly prompted by their husbands' rural employment opportunities in the southwestern parts of the United States. Whilst healthier respondents reported great levels of activity inside and outside the household (four were active in community and church-related programmes) it should be noted that any outsider visiting this group of women could not fail to observe their poverty levels and marginal subsistence conditions. Overall, most older women reported not having had the opportunity to work for the maquiladora sector when they were young teenagers, as this type of industry had not yet arrived in Juárez.⁴⁸

In the case of mature women, whilst only 20% (5 out of 25) were Juarenses natives, the great majority had spent their childhoods in Juárez. When looking at the case of mature women in terms of their status as maquila/non-maquila workers, the data for this cohort reveals that whilst all (7) non-maquila workers were 'the woman of

the house', the great majority of mature maquila women were the women of the household (94% or 17 out of 18). That is, only one remained as a daughter. Moreover, whilst 33% (6 out of 18) mature maquila women had between 0-2 children, all mature non-maquila women had more than 3 children. Having said that, the largest number of mature (maquila and non-maquila) women reported between 3-5 children (11 out of 18 or 61% for mature maquila women and 83% or 5 out of 6 for mature non-maquila women). On the other hand, maquila women in this generation stood out as a group with higher educational attainment than mature non-maquila women. Indeed, the 5 respondents in this mature cohort with schooling levels beyond 'incomplete secondary' reported having some experience as maquila workers. It seems that education may have a role to play in the incorporation of mature women in the sample in maquilas employment. This is evidenced by the fact that 6 out of the 7 mature non-maquila workers had attained primary schooling levels or less, something not reported among maquila workers. Concerning marital status, maquila women showed greater diversity in marital status than their mature non-maquila counterparts. This said, most maquila and non-maquila mature women lived with a partner at the time of the survey. While 67% (or 12 out of 18) mature maquila workers lived with a male partner at the time of the interview (either married or cohabiting)⁴⁹, most mature non-maquila women were living with a male partner (6 out of 7, 86%).

When looking at the mature cohort (maquila and non-maquila) in comparison with their older counterparts there is an increase in educational levels and a reduction in fertility levels as the great majority of mature women reported having between 1 and 4 children. None reported having had more than 8, something that was reported among older women. Moreover, there was a greater number of mature women either natives from Juárez or women who were brought up in Juárez. Similarities between older and mature respondents arise from their status in their households, as most mature women, as well as older respondents, were 'the woman of the house'. Finally, whilst these characteristics applied to mature women as a whole (maquila and non-maquila workers), maquila workers showed even lower fertility rates and higher educational attainment than non-maquila mature women. Conversations with the group of mature women revealed that most recalled having spent their childhoods in poor settlements of Juárez, and having started to work during their teenage years. Interviews with them showed most, maquila and non-maquila, were very outspoken, with many having played

active roles in local political struggles either inside maquilas or at community level.

Exploitation and Integration Thesis followers would explain the situation of mature maquila women differently. Whilst ^{the} Exploitation Thesis adherents would maintain that low fertility rates and higher educational attainment are clearly the result of exploitation of women by the maquila sector as women and as workers, Integration thesis followers would disagree. Exploitation thesis would contend that in seeking higher productivity, maquila management would attract only educated women to perform the repetitive, poorly paid tasks to be performed at high pace on the line. Moreover, women's need for a wage and for access to social security may oblige them to sacrifice their own choices such as discouraging them from having children. ^{The} Integration thesis, on the other hand would argue that the arrival of maquila industries integrate women in public life. Besides giving them access to social security, it prompts women in need of wages to attain higher educational levels, and to move away from the conventional domestic life of reproduction.

With regard to younger women, this group showed great heterogeneity, in particular among the cohort of maquila women. This was reflected in women's position in the household, their migrant and marital status and educational levels. For instance, whilst 80% (27 out of 34) of younger maquila workers were 'the woman of the house', 18% (6 out of 34) were daughters and 1 was a sister. In contrast, no daughters were recorded among non-maquila workers.⁵⁰ Indeed, the great majority of younger non-maquila women were the woman of the house (71% or 5 out of 7). Concerning migrant status, of the total younger maquila workers, 17% were Juarenses natives against 14% recorded among younger non-maquila workers.⁵¹ Fertility figures dropped from the previous cohort and, indeed, from those recorded among older women. Whilst this might clearly reflect younger women's stage in their life cycle, the disparities in fertility levels within the cohort are noticeable. Whilst most younger maquila workers had between 1 and 2 children (77% or 26 out of 34), most younger non-maquila workers had between 3-5 (85% or 6 out of 7). Concerning marital status, there appeared to be a large proportion of younger women living with a male partner across younger maquila and non-maquila women (73% for maquila against 86% for non-maquila women). However, younger maquila women showed higher rates of divorce and separation than their younger non-maquila counterparts (14.7% or 5 out of 34 were separated or divorced at the time of the interview, something not reported at all among younger non-

maquila workers).

Regarding educational attainment, figures showed a wide variety of schooling levels among younger respondents. Whilst the majority of younger maquila workers had attained incomplete secondary (35% or 24 out of 34), 26% (or 9 out of 34) were in the category 'secondary and beyond'. This can be taken to mean that younger maquila workers have, on the whole, higher schooling levels than mature maquila women (5 out of 18 had schooling beyond incomplete secondary). This said, 42% of younger non-maquila workers had attained incomplete secondary as well. On the other hand, 28% had incomplete primary, a higher figure than that reported for younger maquila workers in the sample (as only 9% or 3 out of 34 maquila workers did not finish primary school). The heterogeneity in educational attainment among maquila workers may be partly explained by the numbers of non-locals (only 17% were Juarenses natives), in particular those who came from small town areas where there might have been limited access to formal secondary education (for a similar finding among maquila workers in central Mexico, see Villarreal Gonzáles, 1990). Interestingly, some younger women shared the educational characteristics seen among older women in the sample. Having said that, more younger women attained up to incomplete secondary (15 out of 41 or 37%), revealing higher education levels, in general, for younger women, than those registered among their mature or older counterparts. Nonetheless, women maquila workers within the whole group (older, mature and younger) held the highest educational qualifications despite the fact that some remained below the average.

Interaction with this group of women revealed great heterogeneity in the cohort. Whilst some younger women appeared to be living in great poverty, others were not. Moreover, the overall outspoken features seen in their mature women counterparts were not entirely replicated. Whilst some younger women were very assertive, others appeared very shy and were almost reluctant to be interviewed. Younger women had all seen both the expansion and evolution of the maquila industry and most maquila workers within it had experienced the recent incorporation of males on the assembly line. For contemporary women maquila workers, male assemblers are often not only colleagues at work, but also partners or other household members, something not seen in previous decades. When considering the case of younger maquila women in the light of the selected theories, contention arises. Exploitation Thesis adherents would highlight the higher number of daughters who remained in the parental household serving the

household's economic needs with their maquila wages. Integration Thesis followers, on the other hand, would maintain that maquila respondents and non-maquila respondents from the Nineties derived some benefits from capitalist industrialisation clearly seen in the higher schooling levels reported among maquila workers. Moreover, they would stress the fact that 5 younger maquila women were separated or divorced at the time of the interview.

Conclusion

This chapter constituted an attempt to examine the socio-demographic characteristics of maquila workers with respect to non-maquila women in the sample. Chant's model combined with a life course perspective proved illuminating of maquila women's labour force participation in the sample. On the social ideological side, the chapter looked at the links between gender and age ideologies from the life course perspective and concluded that whilst Latin American women's position in the household retains a much lower status than that assigned to males, resembling many of the characteristics attached to the marianismo-machismo ideology, women's status within the household varied over the life course. This said, it was also stressed that women and men, are subjected to them and may relate to them in rather different ways. Moreover, it was highlighted that older women and younger women retained a lower status than mature women in the household. Concerning age groups, whilst maquila respondents (mature and younger) showed distinctive patterns in terms of household and individual characteristics, maquila and non-maquila households, were shaped by the respondents' life course and the domestic cycles of the households to which workers belonged. Life course factors indeed shaped the trends found in the sample of maquila workers.

The chapter moved on to describe the sample and their employment patterns. Looking at respondents' and their partners' patterns of employment proved helpful in analysing the situation of maquila respondents. Data collected for this study revealed not only the high numbers of mature and younger women with maquila work experience, but also senior women's exclusion from this economic sector of the economy.

Concerning maquila households, the main finding was that households with maquila workers secured access to social security services, namely health facilities, something households without maquila workers did not. This became clear as nuclear

households were the most prominent household type for mature and younger women (maquila and non-maquila workers) but not among older respondents. Thus, contrary to earlier findings from Juárez which reported a greater incidence of female-headed households among maquila workers (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:54), female-headed households in the sample were not found to be characteristic of the majority of maquila respondents. Female-headed households in this sample proved to be more closely related to respondents' stage in the life cycle and the domestic cycle of their households. As a result, younger maquila women rarely headed female-headed households. In contrast, the number of female-headed households headed by older women was high.

Concerning household structures, prominent differences between maquila and non-maquila women as larger numbers of male-extended households were found among maquila workers, something less apparent among non-maquila workers (as reported by María Patricia Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:54).

Concerning individual characteristics, whilst older and younger (maquila and non-maquila) women tended to be migrants, differences across age groups between maquila and non-maquila women were substantial as lower fertility levels and higher educational attainment put mature and younger maquila workers in better situation than mature and younger non-maquila workers and in a considerably better situation than senior women in the sample.

When looking at these data in the light of the selected theories, it surfaced that the situation of older women, when compared to that of mature and younger maquila women in the sample, confirms the predictions established by Marginalisation Thesis adherents and disconfirms those espoused by Exploitation Thesis proponents. Indeed, the marginal circumstances of older respondents in the sample, compared to the better economic prospects seen among mature and younger women, indicates that capitalist industrialisation, whilst excluding and isolating older women from productive roles, fully integrates those educated, urban-born younger respondents into modern forms of industrial employment. Moreover, whilst proponents of the Marginalisation Thesis may argue that a similar case is presented by non-maquila mature women who were also excluded from modern industrial production, I would argue that the issue merits consideration, as the degree of Marginalisation of both older and non-maquila mature women, as well as the degree of Integration of mature and younger maquila women are

permeated by life course factors and their corresponding households' domestic cycle. Varying degrees of Marginalisation are best explained when looking at the case of mature women. Indeed, mature non-maquila women living in extended households with adult children who got access to maquila jobs derived some of the benefits associated with capitalist employment, such as access to social security benefits through their children's incorporation into this form of employment, something older women living on their own did not. Likewise, varying degrees of Integration are seen with the case of younger and mature maquila women. Younger maquila women, who are single mothers living in the parental household with several non-employed members may experience a different situation to the case of mature maquila women who resided in extended households with various adult children working in maquilas. That is, stage in the life course permeates the associated gain women may derive (or not) and the detrimental effects they may have to endure.

Bearing in mind that life course permeates the analysis of female maquila respondents' access to industrial employment, it is possible to say that capitalism whilst confining older rural women in the sample to the household or restricting them to the poorly-paid areas of informal employment, it also allowed mature maquila women to reap the benefits associated with industrialisation, especially those residing in households in its expansionary phase. In other words, whilst the contention between the Marginalisation Thesis and the Integration Thesis derives from the underlying assumptions concerning women's access to capitalist forms of employment, life course factors and the domestic cycle highlight the varying degree of access women had to industrial forms of employment and the associated benefits they may derive, or be deprived from in the process. Exploitation Thesis followers would put it differently. They would contend that life course factors and the domestic cycle help explain the degrees to which capitalism works to the detriment of women workers. Indeed, when looking at the case of younger women, Exploitation Thesis adherents would come in at full force, not only because younger workers are clearly active participants in the development process, (indeed, the large majority of respondents in this age cohort had access to maquila jobs), but also because youth worked against them. It placed them in the position where they had to fulfil the role of daughters and income earners for the benefit of patriarchal households. This point is clearly confirmed when looking at maquila women's individual characteristics. Exploitation Thesis adherents at this point would

highlight the higher number of daughters who remained in the parental household serving the economic needs with their maquila wages. This is proved by the fact that there was a mature maquila woman who remained as a daughter, something not reported among non-maquila women. Integration Thesis followers, on the other hand, would maintain that maquila respondents derived some benefits from capitalist industrialisation clearly seen in the higher schooling levels reported among maquila workers. Moreover, they would stress the fact that four mature maquila women were separated or divorced at the time of the interview, something no older women or even non-maquila mature women reported. Whilst the contention continues, a close approximation at specific stages of respondents' lives, maquila and non-maquila highlights the complexity of the impact that maquila employment has on women workers' lives.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. It should be noted that Chant (1991) also mentions constraints at the level of demand as important determinants of female labour force participation (Chant, 1991:13-18). These however go beyond the scope of this thesis.

2. Townsend's (1995) publication was written in collaboration with Arrevillaga, Bain, Cancino, Frenk, Pacheco and Pérez.

3. González^Z de la Rocha provided some reasons for this, which included the combination of ideological roots of male dominance and poverty faced during the early stages in marriage. She held that young married men's impossibility to be adequate breadwinners and/or to exercise power outside the household prevents them from fulfilling local ideals of what men should be. This, in turn, translate into highlighted male authoritarian roles within the household (González^Z de la Rocha, 1994:142-146). Younger women, however, are not blind recipients of direct male authority in the household. In a longitudinal study in low-income urban Mexico, Levine and Sunderland Correa asked partnered women in their mid-twenties, all of them with young children, to whom they felt closest. Almost invariably women reported their children and revealed having had their adolescent dreams of marriage shattered by their partners' alcoholism, domineering temper, intermittent violence and/or infidelity (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993:96; see also, García and De Oliveira, 1994:213).

4. Gender studies that consider the socio-demographic characteristics of household units in Mexico have become of recent scholarly interest. In these, emphasis is placed on family demography providing interesting insights when explaining labour force configurations over time (see De Oliveira, *et al.*, 1988; García, *et al.*, 1982; Yanagisako, 1979, among many others).

5. Fernández-Kelly, in her Juárez-based study, confirmed that many female-headed households in her sample contained an older woman most likely to be non employed (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a).

6. Reygadas' (1992) household study of maquiladora workers in Juárez and in Chihuahua city found that the generation of mothers whose daughters were members of the 1990s industrial work force, were mostly full-time housewives who showed occasional insertions in the informal sector and nearly none in the industrial work force (*Ibid.*:15-6).

7. Susan Tiano's Mexicali-based study (northern Mexico) found older women living in female-headed households that were smaller in size and with fewer economic contributors than those registered among other household structures (Tiano, 1994:132).

8. This feature has also been registered in central Mexico (see González^Z de la Rocha, 1994:93).

9. Having said that, settlers' knowledge and their willingness to provide this type of information proved a very useful technique, their input to the work presented here being full of insights and providing a first-hand account of the matters under study (see Chapter Two).

10. Information on occupational patterns for males (and females) was divided according to access to social security benefits and flexibility of wages. Thus, the informal sector covered occupational activities where workers did not have access to the provision of social welfare (mostly self-employed workers and workers in commerce and services); the formal sector included occupational activities where workers had fixed wages and access to social security services. For the purpose of the analysis the maquila sector was separated from the formal sector. This was due to the relevance of this type of employment to the study here undertaken and to the distinctive nature of this employment (see Chapter Three).

11. Pearson's correlation coefficient (0.579) was significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

12. I should warn the reader that the cohort of older men did not represent the group of male partners for the cohort of older women. In fact, a large number of older women lacked a male partner in the household at the time of the interview. These two cohorts are put together so as to elucidate patterns of gender and age differentiation in the sample and how these relate to the macro trends reported in Chapter Three, not to state how households were composed.

13. Figures on educational attainment for male partners across age cohorts in the sample reveal some improvement in the educational attainment levels for the mature cohort of males when compared to older males. Thus, whilst none of the older males had schooling above primary education, a few mature males reflected higher educational attainment (16% or 3 out of 18 received schooling beyond primary school level).

14. Of the total 102 men and women engaged in paid employment at the time of the interview, 54 or 53% (26 males and 28 females) had access to social security services through their own incorporation in the formal sector of the economy. When analysing this figure by gender, of the total 57 male partners, 46% (26) had access to social security services through their own participation in the formal sector of the economy at the time of the interview (including the maquila sector), as did 34% (28 out of 82) women.

15. Figures on women's access to social security services across age cohorts show that whilst older women had no access to them through their own incorporation into paid employment in the formal sector, 43% (14 out of 25) did in the subsequent age cohort. Figures for the younger cohort of women dropped to 34% (13 out of 41) who had access to them through their own incorporation in formal sector paid employment. From a mere 12.5% (1 out of 8) male partners with access to social security services in the older cohort, figures on access to social security among males in the sample rose to 39% (7 out of 18) for mature males, and to 58.1% (18 out of 31) for the younger cohort of males.

16. Given the limitations of space and the constraints identified when analysing data on work histories, various criteria were used. In general terms, I tried to be responsive to the respondents' circumstances, their information, the objectives of the thesis and of this section in particular. Thus, for the older cohort of respondents I focused on the ten years of individuals' working life and their work experiences in urban settings prior to the

time of the interview. As respondents' memory at times appeared blurred, I tried to keep the issues revolving around their urban working experiences. For the purposes of comparison, I also present data on the mature cohort focusing on the ten years prior to the interview. However, at times, I include information from earlier times, if relevant. Finally, for the younger generation of both males and females, a five year period was kept in mind. This was due to some respondents' youth which did not allow the analysis to go any further back than that. However, data from respondents with longer work histories were used if relevant and needed.

17. Many of the male respondents in this age group reported having done jobs which included guarding cars, carrying shopping bags for wealthy women at exits to supermarkets and washing lorries and cars locally. Females reported having sold cooked food in the street, ironed and washed clothes for wealthy women locally and begged for food or money.

18. A point to note here is that many respondents in this age group found it difficult to precisely remember how many times they had entered and re-entered the labour market, or else withdrawn from it. Calculations presented here are based on the information provided which, of course, relies on respondents' memory and hence may at times be inaccurate. However, the fact that they could not remember precisely how many times they had stepped in and out of the labour force confirms the point here made.

19. This finding might confirm Tiano's (1994) claims that maquila workers appear to have a particular work 'trajectory' characterised by their sporadic retreat from maquilas into their households. Having said that, whilst they are most likely to return to the maquila sector, it does not necessarily imply they will return to the same maquila (see also Cruz Piñeiro, 1994; De la O Martinez, 1993) (see Chapter Three of this thesis).

20. The remaining two non-maquila mature women in the sample had employment histories in the informal sector with two insertions into their households.

21. Of the remaining, 2 had moved from the maquila sector to the formal sector permanently, one had always worked for maquilas uninterruptedly and one had sporadically worked for the formal sector interrupting her maquila-household pattern.

22. It might be related to the inherent features of the (electronics) maquila sector in Juárez (increasing employment opportunities, variety of work conditions, pay, benefits, etc.). For details on the issue, see Tiano (1994).

23. An interesting point about the 2 unemployed younger males was that they described themselves as waiting in the home for documentation to cross to the United States.

24. Regarding wages in general, it is important to set average earnings in Juárez against the legal minimum wage in other cities in the country. At the time of interviewing, the minimum general weekly wage for Juárez (a category A city) was \$201.50 pesos (US\$25). Other cities in this category included Mexico City, Baja California, Acapulco, Nogales and Matamoros. Cities classified in category B (Guadalajara, Monterrey, Tampico, Hermosillo, and Poza Rica) had a minimum wage of \$ 187 (or US\$ 23). Cities in category C (Aguascalientes, Campeche, Coahuila, Colima, Chiapas, Durango,

Guanajuato e Hidalgo) had a minimum wage of \$170 (or US\$ 21)(Diario de Juárez, 31 December, 1995). For workers who reported wages in dollars, the exchange rate used was (US\$1=\$8.00) the prevailing rate at the time of the survey (see Diario de Juárez, 2 December, 1995). *On June 1st 1996, time the fieldwork finished, the exchange rate was US\$1 = \$7.46 Mexican pesos (olsen and Associates, Currency converter, Switzerland).*

25. Indeed, whilst the mean of weekly wages for all males (including sick and unemployed males at the time of the survey, earnings=0) was \$429 with a data dispersion of \$428, the mean of wages for males, excluding non-employed and sick males amounted to \$480 weekly with a data dispersion of \$424. Similarly, whilst the average mean of wages for women in the sample (including housewives and not employed females, earnings=0, at the time of the survey was \$202 with a StD of \$306, when housewives and not employed women were excluded the St.D. increased. The mean of weekly wages for the cohort of working women was \$360 with a data dispersion of \$333 (see table in Annexes, p.254 this thesis). *See OANDA.com converter/classic*

26. Two of the three older working women in this cohort reported earnings lower than the average for the whole cohort at the time of the survey, at \$10 and \$100, figures which contrasted markedly with the total sample average of \$202.

27. Younger sex workers' earnings, which in some cases amounted to \$2,000 weekly, contrasted with the informal sector wages offered to older workers where earnings were as low as \$10 weekly (street selling) (for a comparative chart males and females across age groups, see table in Annexes, p.255 this thesis).

28. Maquila Wages Standard Deviation=\$117 as opposed to \$480 for the informal sector.

29. Other household types were also found in the sample and whilst less prominent they deserve to be mentioned. Indeed, there was one case of a childless couple; 3 single person households; 1 grandparents and grandchildren; and one nuclear compound. In the specific case of compounds understood as "families who live in the same dwelling environment but function as separate units, even though there might be certain reciprocity between them" (Chant, 1991:234), their rare occurrence in my sample should not be treated as indicative of local patterns. The issue came to question as I realised that some settlers had adult children, nephews and/or nieces living in newly built rooms a few feet away from them. The matter gets even more complex as it appears that locally there exists an enhanced form of fictive kinship. This local form of fictive kin similar to 'compadrazgo' uses the title of uncles and/or aunts. Thus, some respondents when referring to their neighbouring 'aunt' meant a stranger who had over time become 'aunt.' As I explored the issue it appeared that once a woman is given the title of aunt, this woman's children become related to the family who appointed her as aunt. This was also evident in my stay at Carmelita's place, as, over time, I became her 'niece.' More research in this field of border studies is needed.

30. Only as means of providing additional information, older women tended to live in smaller households (50%, 8 out of 16 lived in households with 3 or fewer members including the respondent and the average household size for senior women in the sample was 4 members) than mature and younger women where the average number of household members was 5. It appears that there was a relation between women's

age and the household cycle as it relates to the household size, as 60% of younger women lived in large households (7 or more members).

31. The presence of larger households among maquila workers in Juárez has been reported in earlier studies as well (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a; Staudt, 1986:110).

32. Of the total non-maquila women, 37% (or 11 out of 30) lived in nuclear households, 24% (or 7 out of 30) lived in female-headed households, 13% (or 4 out of 30) lived in female-extended households, 10% (or 3 out of 30) in extended households, 10% (3 out of 30) lived on their own, 1 lived in a household of the type 'a couple with no children', and one lived in a household of the type 'grand parents and grand children'.

33. Less prominent household forms for older women included male-extended households (2 out of 16); female-extended households (1 out of 16), single women in a household (2 out of 16) and grandparent and grandchildren households (1 out of 16).

34. An interesting fact to note about healthy older women in female-headed households was their engagement in non-paid community work (mostly participation in struggles over the allocation of public services, church-related programmes and neighbourhood committee associations at the time of the survey).

35. Of these, two had access to health care through their adult children's incorporation in the non-maquila formal sector, and one had access through a daughter's employment in a local maquila.

36. Older women in extended households (2), although less prominent revealed that they were heavily reliant on adult working children's contributions as well. Neither respondent was a wage earner at the time of the survey and both reported relying on the wage earning activities of a maximum of 2 workers within the household (usually adult children). However, as mentioned earlier, adult children's incorporation into the formal, maquila or non-maquila sector, largely determined whether the respondent would or would not have access to social security. Thus, only one of the 2 respondents in this category had access to this type of benefit. Finally, only one female-extended household was reported among senior women, composed of a full-time housewife who relied on her son's wages (he worked in the formal maquila sector).

37. Only one mature woman lived in a household of the type 'a couple with no children'.

38. As such, these households were, in accordance with Loera de la Rosa's (1990) argument, reaping the few benefits associated with the work in both sectors of the economy i.e. higher earnings in cash (informal sector) and access to social security via the formal sector.

39. Female-extended households whilst not showing great numbers among maquila workers showed similar patterns to large households containing mature women. All mature women who lived in female-extended households were wage earners at the time of the survey (2 in the informal sector and one as a maquila worker). Maquila workers in these households presented working histories of the type maquila-household-maquila-household. In terms of the number of working members in the household, two had more than two working household members and one had more than five working

members. The great number of working adults meant that access to social security in these households seemed secured not only for the respondent but also for non-working parents (if in the household) and for the maquila worker's dependent children. Indeed, the majority of these households held members working either in maquilas or in the non-maquila formal sector of the economy at the time of the survey (2 out of 3 had at least 3 workers in maquilas, and one had one maquila worker).

40. These were followed by female-headed households (2 out of 34 or 6%) and compounds (2 out of 34 or 6%).

41. Of the total women who reported being younger and mature maquila women at the time of the survey, 50% (10 out of 20) did not have children under the age of six and 40% (8 out of 20) had only one child under the age of six.

42. Those looking after children, whilst living in larger households, were not able to rely on other household members to look after their children due either to mothers' old age or their mothers' refusal to help out (that was the case of one single mother).

43. This finding confirms the argument of Staudt (1986:104) as she reports that maquila households are better off as they can secure access to health facilities, something households without maquila workers in Juárez can not.

44. Only one nuclear household was reported in the sample where the respondent worked for the informal sector as a domestic servant and her male partner as a maquila worker. She reported household income of \$330 weekly.

45. Whilst data on income contributions to the household income pool was collected, it was not included in this thesis because this chapter, and the thesis, were long enough.

46. Female-extended households showed similar patterns. These households also put mature women in a better financial situation due to the presence of adult working children in the household. In contrast, younger and older women did not have a very good deal. It is important to note that the young woman's life course, as it relates to the domestic cycle, largely shaped younger women's economic situation. For younger women who are early in their individual life cycle, their financial prospects may be better than for those who remain in the household when other adult working siblings begin to depart.

47. Only one respondent was found to have completed secondary school.

48. As noted in the previous chapter, the non-maquilas formal sector in Juárez did not open many opportunities for older women in Juárez in the late 1960s, a time when most older respondents were approximately 35 years of age or older.

49. The remainder 33% (6 out of 18) did not have male partners in the household (2 were single mothers and 4 were separated or divorced).

50. Of the remaining younger non-maquila workers, only one was a sister and one lived on her own.

51.Brannon and Lucker (1989) surveys carried out in 1987 and 1988 confirms this finding as their study indicates that the maquila industry began to employ recently arrived migrants from the interior in greater numbers than before 1982 when local Juarenses formed the bulk of the maquila workforce (see also Cruz Piñeiro,1993).

CHAPTER 5

Adolescent Daughters, Social Spaces and Partner Selection

The previous chapter showed not only that respondents' stage in the life course permeated the characteristics of the households to which they belonged but that a salient distinction among women in the sample was their employment patterns. While some educated urban-born younger and mature respondents showed access to the formal sector of the economy, in particular maquila employment, older women, and migrants with limited educational attainment showed employment patterns shaped by housewifery, and occasionally combined with sporadic participation in the informal sector.

With the aid of the already identified age and employment cohorts (i.e. older, mature and younger women, and maquila and non-maquila workers) this chapter will start to explore the impact of maquila employment on the lives of the respondents. The first area of analysis is their recorded experiences of partner selection. Whilst this particular aspect of maquila women's lives appeared to have been neglected in Juárez-based studies, data collected revealed not only its importance to respondents, but connections between workers' experiences of spouse choice, life course factors, maquila employment, and the city's social and economic circumstances. This was particularly the case for women attending the highly popular dance-halls, the favourite place for maquila workers to socialise in Juárez. The main conclusion drawn from these data, just as Integration and Marginalisation Thesis proponents suggested, was that the incorporation of some women in the sample into modern forms of industrial employment contributed to altering prevailing patriarchal systems in the area of partner selection. Women's responses and their assessment of such changes, on the other hand, revealed contradictory outcomes.

Before proceeding, I shall define some terms which will be systematically used throughout the chapter.

Literature that tackles definitions of partner selection among heterosexuals depicts it as a practice exclusive to males who intend to attract females with a view to marriage (Ferrandiz and Verdu, 1975; Kendall, 1996:89-91; Oxford English Dictionary, 1992:208). For the purposes of this study, partner selection will refer exclusively to

individuals' first experiences of meeting members of the opposite sex with the intention of pursuing future social and/or sexual interaction, with the possibility of forming a long-term partnership. In other words, partner selection will encompass a process whereby individuals meet potential social mates with the intention of having a relationship that might result in future marriage or cohabitation (Rodney and Lloyd, 1992:xi). Given the broad scope of this definition, the chapter will concentrate solely on the precise place where respondents recalled having met their (first) long-term partners. More specifically, it will explore respondents' recorded experiences of courtship during adolescence, with particular focus on the maquila workers in the sample.

Female Paid Employment and Partner Selection

Whilst gender-aware literature on women's choices of partner selection has revealed that women's process of selecting a partner is usually 'contaminated' by many external pressures (Rodney and Lloyd, 1992:13; Donnan, 1988:208; Lavrin, 1988:1), literature worldwide which specifically looks into the impact of female paid employment on the places where women meet their partners has reached contradictory conclusions. Whilst some argue that females' access to paid employment outside the household can alter conventional spaces for mate selection (Modell, 1989:36), others argue quite the opposite (Rothman, 1984). Moreover, some even suggest that the insertion of women into paid employment does not alter established spaces where partner selection takes place (Kephart, 1972). The controversy appears embedded in whether women have access to work spaces previously reserved for men and/or whether interaction with members of the opposite sex occurs in work-related environments not reported prior to women's access to paid employment. Within this line of thought are those who also suggest that although changes in the place of encounter take place once women enter into the labour market, female paid employment is not the only contributing factor, but instead is part of a set of macro-economic variations within which paid employment is included (Clayton, 1975:281; Montemayor *et al.*, 1994:10). Clayton (1975) for instance, states that changes in occupational and educational patterns affect the places where couples come to know each other. As men and women increasingly share spaces at work and in secondary school, the argument follows that conventional factors affecting partner selection, such as influence of parents over dating practices, spaces for mate

selection and the timing of women's marriage are altered (see Carmichael, 1988:204 in Australia; Lueptow, 1984:12 in the United States¹). Empirical evidence corroborating the above includes Rodney and Lloyd's (1992) historical evaluation of partner selection among some low-income American adolescents prior to industrialisation. Their historical research revealed that most recorded places to meet members of the opposite sex before the advent of urbanisation and female paid employment included the church, the neighbourhood and in the home (usually the young woman's home) where there was some form of adult supervision. Later, however, there was a move to public spaces such as dance-halls where 'individualist' forms of partner selection, or else the practice of self-selected partners took over (Rodney and Lloyd, 1992:23).

Contrary to characterisations that maintain that socio-economic changes such as the insertion of women into paid employment, urbanisation and industrialisation incite greater male/female interaction, thus affecting conventional courting spaces, is the suggestion of Rothman (1984) that with increased industrialisation and subsequent employment differentiation, the interaction between the sexes does not increase but is reduced. Indeed, her research findings revealed that "In spite of the fact that young men and women enjoy greater proximity to one another, there [are].. even fewer points at which their lives intersect" (Rothman, 1984:190). This, she argues, is the result of increasing differentiation in employment which has given men 'male-type' jobs and women 'female-type' jobs. An interesting point however is whether different types of employment give way to changing spaces for meeting members of the opposite sex.

Finally, other evidence has shown the prevalence of conventional places to meet and date partners in areas with high rates of female employment. This is the case posed by the neighbourhood as a setting for encounters among low-income groups. Research has revealed that whilst rapid macro economic changes are recorded worldwide, the neighbourhood, as a courting setting, has historically maintained its popularity among low-income urban groups. "Propinquity or physical nearness", usually referring to place of residence, Clayton suggests "is the most significant factor in marital selection" (1975:28; see also Kephart, 1972). Similarly, based on their findings on low-income settlers in London, Slater and Woodside (1951:94) stated that "for workers living in cramped homes, and with few social contacts, the street provides the main opportunity for meeting the opposite sex."

Beyond discussions on the impact that female paid employment has on women's spaces for partner selection, scholars such as Lavrin have highlighted the need for more autonomy on the side of the woman concerned. As she states, "few decisions in life should be more personal than the choice of a spouse or a lover" (Lavrin, 1988:1). All in all, contemporary literature has encouraged research which makes respondents' own views a central focus of concern (Townsend, 1995).

Partner Selection in Low-Income Mexico

As in many other cultures all over the world, historically, rural and urban Mexican women have not been given a great deal of freedom when it comes to partner selection (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993: 53). High parental intervention and little choice on the part of brides, Gonzáles Móntes (1994:182) states, were commonplace characteristics of local forms of partner selection during the Fifties in central rural Mexico, as "marriage was a family matter, not a question of individual selection based on romantic attraction" (See also Peniche Rivero, 1994:81). Evidence from urban low-income Mexico has corroborated the above. Research has revealed that early in the century, young women's seclusion within the household was a mandatory restriction (Giraldo, 1972) and parents, vigilant over their daughters' reputations, had a duty to watch for potential male suitors in the village or town who may marry them (Ennew, 1988). Such ideology, Stycos (1958) argued, combined the sacrosanctness of virginity, by which young women were endangered by their innocence and physical weakness, with a general distrust of men. Not surprisingly, many young women of the era, were prevented from attending school beyond the primary level, for state secondary schools were rarely gender-segregated and thus exposed girls to possible interactions with young men (Vaughan, 1979). In other words, partners at the time were parentally-selected and largely overlooked the young women's personal preferences (Lewis, 1951:399).²

The mid-century witnessed a challenge to such practices. Indeed, with accentuated financial difficulties, many parents had to accept their daughters' engagement in some economic activities available to young women locally (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993:53). Domestic service in private urban households or paid work in shops affected working daughters' seclusion and parental or next of kin

chaperonage. However, young women working outside the household did not escape chaperonage altogether. Whether parentally arranged or not, young women working as live-in maids in private households or shops had the patrona's surveillance as a substitute for parental supervision (Ennew, 1988: 55; Rubbo and Taussig, 1983; Young, 1987:369). The Sixties and Seventies, on the other hand, made the situation for parents more irreconcilable as households' economic situation deteriorated and job opportunities multiplied for young single women. This was in particular the case in the northern Mexican border region as the newly formed maquila formal sector of the economy began to recruit young, single females (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a). This posed a dilemma for parents as working daughters could not have direct chaperonage while on-the-job. It turned out that what was socially desirable for young women in their parents' eyes, clashed with households' economic viability. Moreover, whilst domestic service remained an economic option, benefits derived from daughters' engagement in the formal sector throughout the Seventies outweighed those of the domestic service. A daughter's steady income plus her access to social security services (which in turn facilitated access to social services for dependent household members, including parents) became assets that were increasingly difficult for parents to ignore (Arenal, 1989:37; see also Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:179). Consequently, parents felt obliged to expose their daughters to previously unacceptable social interactions in the work place. Notwithstanding, whilst many have argued that daughters' earning abilities during the Sixties and Seventies did not translate into more autonomous forms of partner selection as social expectations remained intact during this period (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993:64; Gonzáles Montes, 1994:185) others have argued that despite greater surveillance, access to paid employment in the formal sector certainly expanded the spaces where young female workers came to know their future spouses (Mummert, 1994: 202).

As my research findings will demonstrate, low-income urban Juárez, during the Sixties, revealed the prevalence of urban central Mexican conventional customs in the city (see also Ugalde et al., 1974: 36).³ However, research conducted on female maquila workers in the northern Mexican border region in the Seventies confirms that there appeared to be some non-conventional behaviour among maquila workers once they started to work in the newly arrived assembly industries. Interestingly, little

research has been carried out on the impact of young maquila workers' reported non-conventional forms of behaviour on the spaces for meeting members of the opposite sex. This said, there is evidence of young maquila workers who, despite parental opposition, went out with friends when they joined the maquilas (Iglesias, 1985: 74) and of those who frequented local beer establishments with co-workers (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a: 138).⁴ Indeed, it is even maintained that during the Seventies, northern Mexican female maquila workers, as young as fifteen and sixteen years-old, shared a great sense of conviviality and drank heavily while off-the-job (Arenal, 1989: 91; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a: 138-9;). In fact, most ethnographic accounts have detailed maquila workers' taste for dancing in local night establishments (Arenal, 1989; De la O Martinez, 1995; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a; Iglesias, 1985; Staudt, 1986:113-4). As Fernández-Kelly (1983a:130) commented: "the inexhaustible level of energy of women working at the maquiladoras never ceased to impress me. How could anyone be in the mood for all-night dancing on Saturdays after forty-eight weekly hours of industrial work?"⁵ In addition, Sandra Arenal's (1989) compilation of maquila workers' life histories reveals that during the Seventies, some maquilas' managers occasionally organised so-called días de campo (day trips) upon completion of Friday's work shift (at approximately 3 p.m.) (see also Iglesias, 1985:120). Companies' transport facilities took maquila workers to country places where plenty of food and alcoholic beverages were provided for young female shopfloor workers and administrative personnel. On their way back into the city, many stopped at local discos or nightclubs or at a dance-hall⁶, which appeared to be quite famous then, called the Malibú (Arenal, 1989: 91; De la O Martinez, 1995: 39). Whilst little written material on the Malibú was available at the time of this research, a few local sources revealed that the Malibú was built as part of the local Maquila Association's (AMAC) recreational program (SEP, 1988: 175) and while its commercial name was Malibú, it became commonly known as "Maquilú" due to the frequent presence of female maquila workers. This dance-hall located in central Juárez, local scholar De la O Martinez (1995) maintains, could accommodate up to three thousand people and was open at all hours. In fact, she reports that "it was not surprising to see many maquila workers staying there until very late at night" (De la O Martinez, 1995: 39). Moreover, it seems that within the Malibú, conventional female behaviour and roles were broken down. In a decade of serious male unemployment, not only was the Malibú

heavily populated by female workers, but women maquila workers who visited the establishment felt they could not expect males to pay for drinks and instead paid for them themselves (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:182; see also Arenal, 1989:40).

It is important to note that whilst the dance-hall Malibú no longer operated in the city at the time of the research, the multiplication of dance-halls in Juárez was evident.⁷ Their popularity particularly among low-income groups and their connections with maquila employment appeared difficult to ignore. For one thing, dance-halls seemed selectively located in the surroundings of large maquilas so as to attract the maquila clientele. Not only did their opening hours suit many maquila workers as most dance-halls in Juárez opened from three in the afternoon until very late at night, but transport facilities, provided by some large maquilas, dropped workers off, if they wanted, at dance-halls upon completion of their work shift (usually 4 p.m.).⁸ In addition, free entrance for women on Wednesdays and Fridays, in particular at the dance-hall called 'El Patio', encouraged maquila workers to visit them.⁹ In fact, when interviewed, the administrators of popular dance-halls, commented that dance-halls in Juárez when initially set up were not specifically intended to satisfy the entertainment needs of the maquila work force but they later became their regular clientele. As the night shift's administrator of 'El Patio' stated, "We didn't mean to open this place to serve maquila workers but Juárez is a maquila place. You either serve them or you're out of business." An interesting feature of the Nineties is the fact that maquilas and dance-halls are heavily populated by male maquila, as well as female maquila workers. More specifically, during my visits to El Patio I realised that on Wednesdays and Fridays, a cheer leader enthusiastically called out assembly industries' local commercial names so as to invite their workers to dance as representatives of their maquila workplaces. Though heavily populated by women, men were also called to dance on stage. Observing male maquila workers dancing on stage brought to mind an earlier account of María Patricia Fernández-Kelly (1983a:132) in which she reported the incident of an unlucky male who got onto a bus in Juárez only to be whistled at and teased by several female maquila workers who were travelling on it. Similarly, women maquila workers in the dance-hall, on this occasion, purposely embarrassed male dancing competitors, calling them names and laughingly commenting on their physical attributes and dancing skills.¹⁰

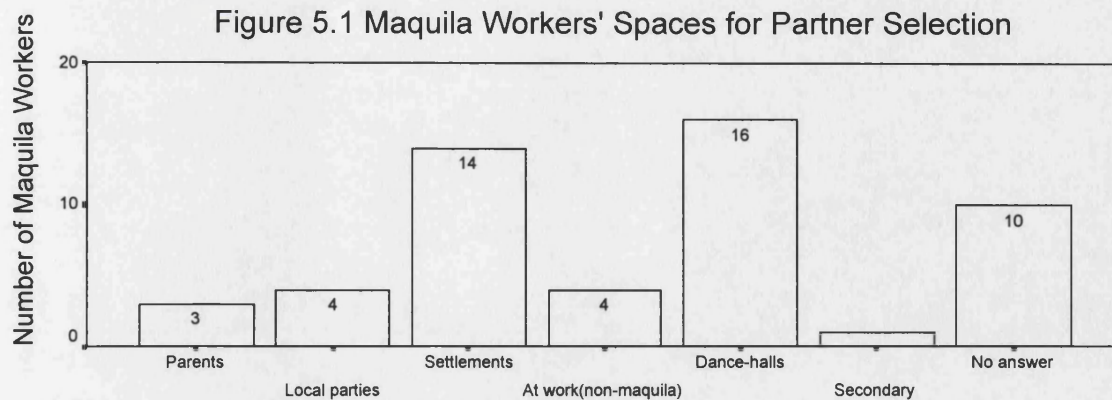
The next section will explore whether the opportunity to socialise, date and mate men existed for maquila workers in the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties in the sample, whether such practices were a result of their employment in maquilas, and if so, whether other women (non-maquila women) had access to them. Answering these questions will give ^{clues} ~~cues~~ as to whether the arrival of maquilas in any way contributed to altering local patriarchal forms of domination specifically in the area of partner selection.

The Respondents in the Sample

Women in the sample, maquila and non-maquila workers, across age cohorts revealed the important role played by work environments when exploring the places where they met their partners. This section will initially explore the spaces where maquila and non-maquila workers in the sample met their partners. Next, a disaggregated analysis by age (using the older, mature and younger cohorts) and employment will place in context the specific spaces in which maquila women as young adolescents, met their future spouses. Finally, the chapter will close with women's views on the ways maquila workers meet their mates in contemporary Juárez.

A primary analysis of maquila workers' places for partner selection in the whole sample versus non-maquila workers revealed the predominance of parental partner selection among non-maquila women, something very few maquila workers in the sample reported. Indeed, whilst only 5.8% (3 out of 52) maquila respondents reported having had their husbands selected by their parents, 33.3% (10 out of 30) non-maquila respondents did. Having said that, after parentally selected marriages, non-maquila workers' most recurrent place to meet partners was the non-maquila work place (17% or 5 out of 30). Maquila workers' most recurrent places to meet their partners included dance-halls (31% or 16 out of 52) followed closely by the settlement in which they lived (27% or 14 out of 52) (see Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3). The fact that women maquila workers showed less parental intervention in the selection of their future partners, may support the claim of Integration Thesis adherents. A close look at the case of older women, mature and younger women in the sample shows more specific trends and more definitive conclusions.

Figure 5.1 Maquila Workers' Spaces for Partner Selection

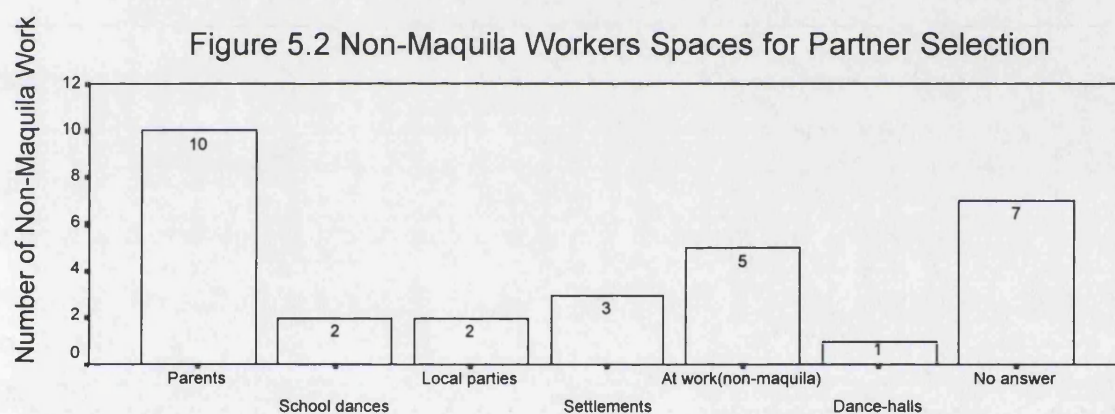


Partner selection

Source: Household Survey, Juarez, 1996.

n=52

Figure 5.2 Non-Maquila Workers Spaces for Partner Selection

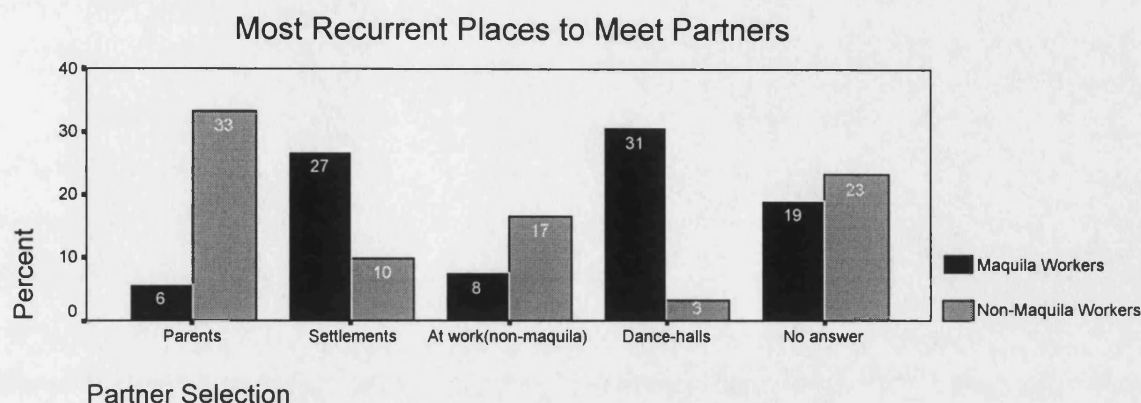


Partner Selection

Source: Household Survey, Juarez, 1996

n=30

Figure 5.3 Comparative Chart Maquila and Non-Maquila Workers



Source: Household Survey, 1996

n=82

Note: Percentages show sample distribution

Older women

Older women, who were adolescents during the Thirties, Forties and early Fifties, illustrated the strength of conventional gender norms then and the resulting limitations on their partner selection practices.

Many older women were reluctant to discuss the issue (31%, or 5 out of 16, would not respond when asked about this aspect of their past) a hesitancy possibly reflecting their discomfort either with the way their marital unions had been established and/or about discussing such private matters in an interview context.

Given that not all older women elaborated further on their partner selection practices (only 6 out of 16 elaborated on it) it remains uncertain whether those who answered the questionnaire without commenting on the issue in their life histories reported what they considered to be socially acceptable rather than what actually happened in their personal experience.

A common feature across most older respondents (8 out of 11) though, was admitting having had not only very little choice in selecting their partners but having married men with whom they had only superficial acquaintance. Indeed, 72% (8 out of 11) of those who collaborated in answering this question, reported having met their mate

through parents or relatives. The remaining three reported having met their partners as follows: two at parties¹¹ and another in the neighbourhood at a low-income settlement in Juárez.

Concerning age at the time of marriage, among older respondents, thirteen out of the sixteen respondents married between the ages of fifteen and prior to their twenty-first birthday, with 18-years of age being the average. While this average of 18 might be regarded as 'late' given the expectations in place at the time, a salient point to question is whether respondents got married after they had lived together with their partners or after out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Five older women stated that they were pregnant prior to getting married. This is interesting, as 8 out of 11 stated that they had had their marriages arranged by parents. This might suggest that possibly two women in the older cohort who had parentally arranged marriages either formed a consensual union prior to being able to afford a marriage ceremony or, agreed to marry because they were pregnant. In the latter case, it is possible that the idea of getting married, whether welcome or unwelcome, was as much to safeguard their family's as their own reputation. Although older women's early pregnancies might also suggest a sense of autonomy on the part of the young women concerned, the circumstances surrounding each case are worth considering. Unfortunately, four out of the five older women who admitted having been pregnant prior to marriage declined to talk about it. Socorro¹², an older respondent, while not talking about her specific case, said that young women of her era were easily taken in by strangers. As she put it: "How could a young woman who has always been indoors know how to react or defend herself when talked into something she doesn't know about ?" While this might not always have been the case, senior women who admitted to having been pregnant before marriage, commented with some embarrassment that once pregnant, young women of their generation felt pressured into marriage, with there being no alternative to this social expectation. Cristina, an older woman, revealed distress and worry about her early out-of wedlock pregnancy at that time. Cristina lived with her parents in a rancho and got pregnant when she was 16 years old. As the father of the child, a young miner, did not want to marry her, her parents asked her to leave the household. She went to Juárez to hide her pregnancy at her sister's place. In her words: "When I found out I was pregnant, I felt very embarrassed, I covered my stomach and pretended it was not me who was

pregnant.....My parents died thinking I was a loose woman.”

To sum up, reported experiences of older women revealed a pattern where most respondents shared high parental intervention and little choice when selecting their spouses. That is, the site of patriarchal control which remained in the private spheres undermined senior women's preferences in the area of partner selection.

Mature and Younger Women's Spaces for Partner Selection

Mature and younger women in the sample, both maquila and non-maquila workers, revealed complex forms and settings for partner selection. This was partly the result of the great number of women who reported having had a boyfriend prior to establishing a long term partnership. Moreover, cases of mature and younger women in the sample where the first boyfriend was different from the later husband was higher among younger respondents than among mature respondents. Whilst 59% (10 out of 17) of those mature women who answered the question on first boyfriend asserted they had had at least one boyfriend prior to marriage (different from the actual husband), 68% (28 out of 41) of younger women reported having had at least one boyfriend at the time of the interview. Moreover, concerning patterns of refusal to talk about the place where respondents met their husband, when compared to older women, fewer mature women and even less younger women refused to talk about the way they met their husbands or partners (7 out of 25 or 28% for mature women¹³ and 5 out of 41, or 12.2% for younger women). These figures revealed a real decline in the pattern of refusal to talk about partner selection practices across older, mature and younger respondents. Indeed, refusal percentages across the three cohorts were 31.3% for older women, 28% for mature women and 12.2% for younger women. This pattern might suggest that younger women felt more at ease to talk about the way their marriage relationships were formed, either because they felt comfortable with the way they were formed, or because there was no stigma around any particular way of forming them. Alternatively, it could also be that younger respondents did not feel threatened by me (a 29 year-old interviewer), something that could perhaps have happened with older women.¹⁴ However, it is puzzling that five younger respondents refused to provide information on the issue (3 younger maquila women and 2 non-maquila women).¹⁵

Moving on to the most common place where younger and mature respondents

met their boyfriends, the settlements where respondents lived were the most popular place across both cohorts.¹⁶ This is not surprising given that mature and younger respondents were first or second generation migrants in Juárez. This said, whilst 50% (7 out of 14¹⁷) of mature respondents who admitted having had a boyfriend prior to marriage, went out with a young boy from the settlement where they lived¹⁸, 9 out of 41 (22%) younger respondents did. This can be explained by the variety of settings such as dance-halls and maquila premises¹⁹, secondary school and local parties, more often reported by younger women than by mature women in the sample. Indeed, the next two most frequently reported meeting places for mature women after the neighbourhood, were dance-halls and secondary school,²⁰ while younger women's figures for local parties, (5 out of 41, or 12.2%) and maquilas and dance-halls (5 out of 41 or 12.2%) were the most frequent, after the neighbourhood (9 out of 41).

When disaggregating the information by maquilas and non-maquila workers, mature non-maquila workers' most common places to meet boyfriends revealed that school dances (2 out of 7), the settlement (2 out of 7) and parentally selected partners (2 out of seven) were most common²¹ while mature maquila workers instead seemed to have distinctive partner selection practices which favoured the settlements (5 out of 9 or 28%) and dance-halls (2 out of 9 or 11%).²² These data may indicate that mature maquila women pioneered some non-conventional spaces for partner selection which reinforced the strength of the settlement as a setting for partner selection and introduced dance-halls as a new setting. An interesting point to note in relation to these disaggregated data on maquila and non-maquila women for the mature cohort is that respondents who omitted the question on the place they met boyfriends were all maquila workers (9 out of 18). It is possible that these workers opted for the new non-conventional forms of partner selection (namely dance-halls), apparently deemed less desirable, as indeed non-maquila workers did not object to answering the question.

Younger maquila workers, on the other hand, reported the settlement (7 out of 34 or 21%) followed by dance-halls (5 out of 34, 15%) and local parties (4 out of 34 or 12%) as the most recurrent places where they met boyfriends. Whilst younger maquila workers' preferences for the settlement and dance-halls appear to make their experiences of partner selection similar to those reported by mature maquila women, it is worth noting that parties, a setting mentioned by older women but not by mature

maquila women, throws some doubt on this. This said, the pattern of refusing to answer the question on where boyfriends were met resembled the case of mature maquila women as all younger women who did not answer this question were maquila workers as well (11 out of 34 or 32% refused to answer).

Concerning the least common places where mature and younger women met their first boyfriend, it was clear that parentally selected forms of partner selection were not strongly represented in the sample (for either maquila or non-maquila workers). There were only two cases of mature women, non-maquila workers, who reported having met their partners through relatives. Not surprisingly, these two respondents later married their first and only boyfriend. Concerning younger women, there was only one case of a younger woman, a maquila worker, who reported that her parents chose her first boyfriend. The practice of parentally selected boyfriends reported by a younger respondent, as opposed to parentally selected husbands, as reported by the two mature women, might lead one to deduce that parents of the younger woman may have allowed some time for the couple to get to know each other instead of arranging the marriage at once, as reported by the two mature women and by older women in the sample.

Moving on to the places where mature and younger respondents met their first husband or first stable partner, as with their first boyfriends, popular places included the settlements, maquilas and/or dance-halls. The most frequently reported places among mature women, in particular, were, the settlement (6 out of 25 or 24%), non-maquila work places (6 out of 25 or 24%), and dance-halls (3 out of 25 or 12%).²³ Mature women's responses revealed the pivotal role of the work place in shaping the encounters of members of the opposite sex. Disaggregated further, however, mature maquila workers showed that the settlement (5 out of 18 or 28%) followed by dance-halls (3 out of 18 or 17%) were the most representative while for mature non-maquila workers' the most representative places to meet their husbands were their non-maquila workplace (3 out of 7, 43%) and relatives (2 out of 7 or 29%). An interesting point is that the settlement appears to be a maquila courting place as non-maquila workers did not seem to meet their partners in the settlements in equal numbers.²⁴

Regarding the places where younger women met their first husband, as with the first boyfriend, there seemed to be a great predominance of maquilas and dance-halls (14 out of 41) and the settlement (10 out of 41) followed by local parties (4 out of 41).²⁵

Within these findings younger maquila workers showed a wide range of places where they met their partners, the most representative being dance-halls (38%, 13 out of 34) followed by the settlement (26%, 9 out of 34) and parties (12%, 4 out of 34). The most frequent places for non-maquila younger women included their non-maquila work places (29%, 2 out of 7), school dances (1) and the settlement (1). Interestingly, one non-maquila younger woman reported having met her husband in a dance-hall. Whilst it is clear that places and spaces to meet partners multiplied for younger women, maquila workers seemed to have retained a strong preference for the settlement and dance-halls. In comparing the case of mature maquila workers with that of younger maquila workers it is apparent that the younger maquila cohort had more spaces to meet partners than mature maquila women in the sample. Whilst the large majority of mature women met their partners in the neighbourhood and a few in dance-halls, younger maquila workers displayed conventional means (e.g. parentally selected, local parties), evolving (the neighbourhood) and alternative places (dance-halls, maquilas and secondary school) to meet their partners. The multiplicity of places recorded among younger maquila women and not among mature maquila women might reflect the heterogeneity found among younger respondents' individual characteristics (e.g. migrant status, educational levels, etc. see Chapter Four), something less obvious among mature maquila women.

With regard to reported age at the time of marriage and when having the first born child, the average seemed to have been maintained from one generation to the next (as 21 was the mean age at the time of marriage for both cohorts²⁶ and 20 was the mean of age when having the first born child for both cohorts²⁷). Interestingly, 2 mature women (one maquila worker and one sex worker) reported having chosen not to have children at all, something not seen with their counterparts among senior women as all senior women reported having children at the time of the interview.

To sum up, a notable reduction in parentally-chosen partners was clear across the cohorts which demonstrated a possible receding trend in conventional forms of partner selection in the sample, in favour of new places for meeting husbands such as dance-halls and the settlements. As such this evidence supports the claims of Marginalisation and Integration Thesis adherents and dismisses Exploitation Thesis theorists. Non-maquila women respondents' experiences of partner selection highlight

the fact that capitalist industrialisation may contribute to counteracting local patriarchal forms of domination in the area of partner selection. This is evident in the reduced cases of maquila workers who had parental supervision when selecting their partners and the high numbers of maquila workers selecting partners away from the parental gaze and in social spaces created and encouraged by maquila employment. The situation however, may not be that straightforward. With the use of qualitative material I shall next analyse the place where maquila women initially met their partners/husbands with respect to other women in the sample. Data on the specific circumstances around each type of partner selection and the specific spaces for maquila workers within, provided evidence which challenged the claims of Integration and Marginalisation thesis theorists concerning maquila workers and the benefits they derived in the area of partner selection as a result of their incorporation in maquilas. Having said that, these data confirmed the claims of Marginalisation thesis theorists with regard to mature and women in their houses and in the informal sector, as will be explained next.

Mature and Younger Women as Teenagers in their Households: Parentally-Selected Forms of Partner Selection

Mature and younger respondents who when meeting their partners had not engaged in paid employment appeared to share similar patterns with their older counterparts in that they were closely supervised by their parents or chaperons⁶. Indeed, their stories showed little choice in the partners they married.

Mature respondent Mónica, a street seller at the time of the interview, lived with her parents while being closely supervised. She recalled having her marriage arranged and willingly complying with her parents' wishes. "My parents knew what was best for me and they chose José a hardworking man. They brought him and his parents to the house once and mum called me to say hi to the guests." Moreover, Socorro and Adela, mature respondents, also lived in the parental household as young children and teenagers. Whilst Socorro and Adela reported very little acquaintance with their husbands prior to marriage, they recalled having seen their husbands in the settlement prior to the arrangement. As parents and chaperons⁶ considered suitors from the settlement a good option on the grounds that they could see the family they came from, these respondents married suitors with whom they had only superficial acquaintance.

One younger woman reported having had her boyfriend selected by her parents. This respondent remained in the household until marriage and had close chaperonage by parents. Based on the above, it is possible to assert that parentally arranged partner selection practices may have prevailed locally or at least among a few women in the sample.²⁸

Non-maquila Work Places: Informal and Rural Sector Workers

Respondents who, as workers in the informal sector, met their partners in work-related environments showed very work-specific experiences of partner selection. Commonalities among workers who met their partners in the informal sector and in rural environments arose from the fact that their experiences revealed increased opportunities to meet and see males. However, this did not always mean friendly levels of interaction and acquaintance with males while on-the-job. Lack of administrative supervision of male colleagues at work appeared to have put women workers in quite a disadvantageous position as it exposed them to verbal sexual insinuations and sexual harassment.

Mature respondent, Agustina, for instance, met her partner in a fruit selling kiosk in Juárez where both worked prior to her joining the maquilas. She reported feeling very pressurised by a male colleague's continuous advances at work until she finally decided to go out with him. Insistent propositions made her comply with his wishes and she married him when she turned 14 years of age. Whilst she primarily wanted to escape from the poor treatment she received in the parental household, she also admitted having only a very superficial acquaintance with her partner at the time she got married. Similarly, Martha started agricultural work in Colorado, USA, when she was 17. She recalled working long hours with male and female colleagues in the fields. She reported that she, like most of her female co-workers, used to hate the job, as it exposed them to unwanted sexual advances by male co-workers. In her words: "What I hated about working in the field was that the men did not leave us [young women] alone." As she got pregnant she was laid off and returned to live with her grandmother.

To sum up, the spaces for partner selection among women workers in the rural and informal sector in the sample appeared shaped by their employment practices and the resulting freedom to interact with males which in turn made of women target of

sexual harassment or of physical violence. So far, evidence from older women and women workers in the informal sector suggests that these women were Marginalised from any potential benefits capitalist forms of industrialisation may provide in the area of partner selection. However, whilst for the senior women in the sample the site of patriarchal control was the household, for mature women working in rural settings the site of patriarchal control shifted. Women working in agricultural jobs were oppressed by the local patriarchal system that made them targets of sexual harassment and male violence while on the job.

Maquila - Related Environments

Data collected from mature women, the young maquila workers of the Seventies revealed that their opportunities to leave the parental household in order to go to work in maquilas initially allowed them to meet men in various settings such as in the neighbourhood, and later in dance-halls.

As young maquila workers, mature respondents, Blanca, María Guadalupe and Lourdes found it easy to make male and female friends in the settlements when going to, or returning home from, the maquilas. They reported visiting friends, especially on their way back from maquilas to their homes and eventually met their later husbands in the neighbourhood. A characteristic feature of these encounters though is that although these workers went out with their husbands prior to marriage for at least a year, they also mentioned that their parents' approval of their dates played an important role in their later decision. In Maria Guadalupe's words: "My parents did not choose him for me. No! but my mum said he was alright....Yes, I suppose that helped in my decision to marry him." A type of encounter with members of the opposite sex with reduced parental intervention whilst reported by maquila workers in the sample was not exclusive to them. As a young secondary school student prior to her incorporation into maquilas, Lourdes recalled walking home from school and occasionally visiting friends and classmates living in the neighbourhood, something she continued to do when she joined the maquilas. Whilst it is possible that as secondary school students, women of the era had the opportunity to meet and date people from the neighbourhood, women's incorporation into maquilas employment did not hamper this option. Connections between secondary school, maquilas and the neighbourhood were further explained by

Margarita, a maquila worker of the Seventies, who mentioned having kept the same friends from school when she joined the maquila. In fact, her group of friends decided to apply for jobs at the same time in the same maquila.

In short, boyfriends and future husbands met in neighbourhoods under such circumstances reflected an evolving situation where greater freedom to select partners arose from either parents' less stringent forms of chaperonage than in earlier epochs and/or young women's greater ease of access to interaction with young males locally. It should be noted though that respondents who met their partners in the settlement who manifested having married somebody of their initial preference, more often than not, had their choice of partner approved of by their parents. At this point it can be said that the incorporation of women into modern forms of industrial employment may have contributed to altering the existing local patriarchal forms of domination in the area of partner selection. The fact that some women maquila workers in the sample reported reduced parental intervention in their partner selection experiences as a result of their associated freedom to go out of the household to work may suggest a shift in conventional practices from parentally selected forms to less parentally-intervened ones.

Meeting partners in the settlement was not the only place where maquila workers could escape parental chaperonage, other mature maquila workers found in dance-halls a place to date and mate partners, away from the gaze of parents and chaperons. Indeed, three mature maquila women stated that they used to attend dance-halls with their female work colleagues back in the Seventies, when they were younger maquila workers. Mature workers, Martina, Diana and Gisela attended dance-halls with friends despite the disapproval of their parents and/or next of kin. They mentioned that they defied their families and attended the dance-halls as they felt they deserved it after their strenuous work on the line. Confirming the literature on dance-halls, these three women stated that this type of partner selection was popular among women maquila workers. Indeed, maquila employment was often an entrance requirement of the establishments, especially, the Malibú. In fact, no mature non-maquila workers in the sample reported having visited these establishments or having dated their partners in dance-halls during the Seventies. Moreover, the combined effect of maquila women's access to an income of their own in the Seventies, a time of great male unemployment, coupled with dance-hall entertainments encouraged by the maquiladora employment, might have enhanced

local mature women's greater sense of control over their interactions with local males. For instance, Diana, a mature maquila worker, reported that she used to pay for drinks for her boyfriends and/or dancing partners during the Seventies. As she put it: "Although it is nice to have a man paying for you, we [women] had no choice then... Mind you, as it was my money I offered a drink to whom I wanted and when I wanted. It was like being the boss."²⁹

Moreover, the women in the cohort who visited dance-halls usually in groups with female co-workers in the Seventies revealed such experiences in highly positive ways: For instance, Diana, stated: "We really had fun in the Malibú in those days"; Teresa: "I really enjoyed dancing and going out as a young maquila worker". And finally, Lupita, "If a maquila worker did not enjoy herself back in the Seventies, it was because she did not want to."³⁰

Whilst the arduous work on the line was not denied by any of these workers, it appeared that dance-halls provided a much sought after source of entertainment for the workers of the era. As Leti put it: "Fridays was the best. I would spend a long time getting ready to work in the morning because we knew after work we would go dancing." Whilst it may remain likely as María Patricia Fernández-Kelly (1983:182) stated: that "the dancing and the euphoria of discotheques provide [workers] with the only means of release in an interrupted cycle of monotonous work and domestic problems", it is striking that such entertainment altered patriarchal forms of local partner selection practices deemed appropriate for younger women of the era. This is evident in the fact that relationships formed in dance-halls appeared to be highly secretive and knowledge of them was only shared by the young woman and her friends.

A highlight of dance-halls, not reported by many respondents, was the existence of motels behind dance-hall premises. The issue emerged through conversations with Lupita, a mature respondent, who worked for maquilas for over fifteen years throughout the Seventies and Eighties. Lupita mentioned that local women's access to contraception during the Seventies and Eighties, combined with the opportunity to attend dance-halls, might have resulted in greater sexual freedom among co-workers of the era. Apparently, some dance-halls during the Seventies, such as 'El Fronterizo', had a restaurant and a motel behind its premises. Motels behind dance-halls might have given women the option to visit them after dancing with their mates.³¹ Notwithstanding,

whilst it gave women some sexual freedom, it also gave opportunistic men the chance to harass women, either at the entrance to the dance-hall, or when leaving the maquila workplace on Fridays. At this point Exploitation thesis proponents would explain the situation of maquila workers. They would argue that the maquila industry whilst contributing to enhancing male/female interactions at the work place, thus prompting the emergence of relationships with greater ease than in earlier epochs, the increasing incorporation of women on the line may also have elicited new forms and sites of patriarchal control over maquila workers' choices in the area of partner selection.

Finally, whilst dance-halls and neighbourhoods appeared quite favoured dating places among mature maquila workers in the sample, other forms were also reported. Such was the case of two assertive maquila workers, who felt at ease to make initial advances to their later partners (and to report having done so). This type of partner selection, not revealed by any other women in the cohort (or in the whole sample) revealed great levels of autonomy in the women concerned and a total lack of parental supervision. Lupita, a maquila worker, said she went to Cuco's (her later husband's) work place, a milk delivery shop, to establish the initial conversation and later asked him to go out on a date with her. "I visited him many times until one day I said to him 'Yes or No?', he laughed and that was it". When Lupita's chaperon^e, her grandmother, died, Lupita invited him to live in her place (a self-built home where she and her daughter lived). Similarly, Teresa, another maquila worker, reported, that on one of her visits to the town hall in Chihuahua city, she decided to establish conversation with Jesus, her later husband. Later, they started going out together and when she got pregnant she asked him to move in with her. An interesting point about these two maquila workers is that, prior to the first encounter with their later partners, both women had worked on the line for several years and recalled having had many boyfriends prior to the formation of these long-term partnerships.

So far this evidence suggests that mature maquila women's experiences of partner selection appeared to have moved away from the conventional system that deemed parentally-selected partners the norm and instead enabled women workers to select partners away from parents and chaperones. The Seventies however brought ~~e~~special circumstances for such turn of events. The female-led workforce and the high levels of male unemployment locally (see Chapter Three this thesis) may have

contributed to reducing parental intervention in the partner selection choices. Whilst it may be argued that some maquila women of the Seventies derived some benefits from their incorporation in maquilas in the area of partner selection, it is also possible to suggest that they began to face a new form of control. The patriarchal control that existed on their partner selection practices at the household level may have shifted to the workplace. Indeed, maquilas may have begun to gain control over workers' leisure.

Moving on to the case of younger women, the complexity of the trends seen among younger maquila workers may be explained by the connections between secondary school, maquilas and meeting partners in the neighbourhood, and shaped by factors which included: the unprecedented high levels of local violence, women's higher educational achievement, and the incorporation of male workers on the line. Whilst local violence deterred some young workers from going out late at night to dance-halls, it also prompted closeness to male operatives, especially if they were also neighbours, as males and females would walk together on their way to and from maquilas. Dating in maquilas and dance-halls, like dating in neighbourhoods, was related to the levels of local neighbourhood violence. In seeking safety, younger female workers, for the most part, visited dance-halls with male co-workers who were also neighbours. Walking together with males of a similar age who were co-workers and sometimes neighbours prompted the formation of relationships. Moreover, improved transport services in Juárez eased workers' movement from dance-halls to their homes late at night. Some mothers, on the other hand, revealed that they preferred their daughters to be accompanied to dance-halls and maquilas, by a well-known young man from the settlement. Not surprisingly, there appeared to be an increase in younger workers' willingness to embrace dance-hall and neighbourhood forms of partner selection. Highlighted violence in the settlements combined with the greater presence of males on the line may, nonetheless have, reduced earlier female-led camaraderie and conviviality in dance-halls whilst also inciting the formation of partnerships not only away from the parental gaze but among the male and female maquila workforce.

An interesting issue concerning younger maquila workers of the Nineties is who buys the drinks in dance-halls. Whilst some of the younger respondents who talked openly about dance-halls stated that they did not mind paying for drinks for male and female friends, others stated that they would not buy drinks for males. This contrasts

with the information provided by some mature maquila workers who, in the Seventies, paid for males. The fact that males have increasingly obtained access to maquila jobs, Lucia, a younger respondent held, possibly explained the reluctance of some younger workers to pay for their male dancing partners in dance-halls. In her words: "Why should we pay for them? They [men] can queue in the morning to get a job, just like us [women maquila workers]." Moreover, other notable features that emerged include that contemporary non-maquila workers are not deterred from attending dance-halls nor do all female maquila workers who attend dance-halls agree to date male maquila operatives. Indeed, younger non-maquila worker, Claudia, reported having met her husband in a dance-hall. She mentioned that although she had never worked for maquilas, she had friends in the neighbourhood who used to invite her to go out dancing to dance-halls. It was on one of these occasions that she met the man who later became her husband. Since one non-maquila younger woman reported having access to dance-halls, this might suggest a possible multiplying effect of maquila forms of partner selection across other local women, something not reported among mature women. This may corroborate the Integration Thesis adherents' proposition that the arrival of maquiladoras is liberatory not only for maquila workers but for women in society at large. This said, whilst some younger maquila workers might have been encouraged to move around accompanied by males, there was also evidence of younger women whose parents forbade them from going out late at night with maquila operatives on the grounds that maquila males were likely to be cholos. Also there were incidences of younger women who, while attending dance-halls, preferred to go out with non-maquila males. Margarita, a younger maquila worker, stated that sexual harassment in the factory, jealousy and rivalry had prevented many female young maquila workers from going out with male co-workers. According to Margarita, the presence of male maquila workers on the line, although still a minority in many factories, had increased gossip and led to a poor working atmosphere.³² This, in turn, might have prevented some female co-workers from meeting potential maquila male partners on- or off-the-job. This final information on young maquila workers of the Nineties may disclaim Integration theorists and might support Exploitation thesis followers who would argue that as members of their households, young maquila daughters see their choices constrained by the combined effect of patriarchal domination at the household level and

capital, namely maquilas. Indeed, the tension that emerges between Exploitation Thesis followers and Integration thesis adherents comes from the fact that contemporary younger maquila workers whilst being able to freely interact with male co-workers in dance-halls, at work, and in the neighbourhoods due to heightened violence in the settlements, may also experience not only greater parental surveillance over the males they can walk around with in the settlements, but also greater control from maquilas over their mate choices.

Recapping, partner selection among maquila workers from the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties with respect to their counterpart non-maquila workers (older, mature and younger women) in the sample, can be seen to have been clearly shaped by their maquila employment patterns and permeated by local circumstances. Whilst maquila workers of the Seventies had the opportunity to move away from the parental gaze, meet male and female friends in the neighbourhood and visit dance-halls with female colleagues from work, younger generations' spaces for partner selection have been largely shaped by the heritage left by their colleagues from the Seventies (dance-halls), the incorporation of male workers on the line and by the unprecedented levels of local violence. Thus, the settlements, dance-halls, and maquilas closely intertwine to shape the specific spaces where maquila workers meet and socialise with men. All in all these new spaces have largely shifted the site of patriarchal control over women's choices of partner. Whilst it initially was the household through close parental supervision, it moved to the workplace where women can meet partners away from the parental gaze but under the control of management.

Whilst the information presented for the sample reveals a progressive trend where conventional forms of partner selection are slowly being displaced by alternative forms, it is relevant to explore what respondents in the sample thought about the impact of maquilas on the practices of partner selection among maquila workers. For this purpose, I shall next use the material collected from semi-structured interviews and inter-generational discussions which illuminate the contradictions that lie behind the fast pace of change in practices of partner selection in Juárez.

When individually interviewed, older women expressed regret over the way their partnerships had been formed. They stated that they wished they had had the freedom and openness to select partners that many maquila women in Juárez had in contemporary times and manifestly regretted for not having as many employment

opportunities or the chance to 'see the world' before getting married. Whilst they did not openly refer to dance-halls they agreed that maquila workers had more opportunities than they themselves had or women of their generation generally did. Limited entertainment, hard, unrewarding work within the household and poverty were mentioned among the many perils older women endured during their youth.

Moving on to the interviews with individual mature maquila women on the issue of partner selection, mature respondents who agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews revealed great comfort over the way their partnerships were formed. They appeared very forthcoming about their dance-hall encounters where they had met many men, and had many boyfriends prior to getting married. They were quite clear in expressing their opinion that although they had been forced to work much too hard in the maquilas, much harder than their mothers had needed to work in the home, in their views their opportunities for personal enjoyment had been much greater than those open to women in previous generations. According to them, within dance-halls, unchaperoned encounters between young men and women, took place.

Interestingly, during the inter-generational discussions where the same senior women discussed the issue with their maquila daughters, the older women who participated in these discussions displayed a totally different attitude. Whilst these senior women had previously stated discomfort over the way their marriages had been formed, when confronted with a situation in which they had to talk openly about partner selection in dance-halls in front of their (maquila) daughters, they explicitly stated pride in the way their parentally selected marriages took place. They exalted the close supervision they had by parents and chaperons and regretted seeing changes in the ways marital unions took place in 'modern' Juárez. Moreover, when confronted with their own mothers, mature maquila women's previously exalted experiences of partner selection were denied or understated. Once the topic of personal experiences of partner selection for maquila workers of their era was brought up, mature respondents blushed and preferred not to talk. Their silence primarily led me to believe that the information on dance-halls and their experiences of partner selection had not previously been revealed to their mothers. In addition, it also manifested not only a prevailing reverence for mothers and a fear of disappointing them, but possibly, a persistent social desirability for conventional forms of partner selection. Alternatively, if knowledge of dance-halls as maquila workers' favourite places, some of which had a motel incorporated, was as

widespread locally in the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties as it seemed, it is likely that there was a stigma attached to dance-halls as meeting places for the formation of marital unions which made maquila workers of the era who attended them, not surprisingly want to keep this matter secret.

The situation became more complex when looking at the case of mature maquila women, those who had attended dance-halls, in an interview context with their young maquila daughters. The case of younger workers was clearly shaped by the fact that the younger interviewees who took part in the inter-generational discussions were single maquila mothers. On these occasions, it was mature mothers' turn not only to avoid talking about their own experiences but to remind daughters of the importance of decency and integrity in the life of a young woman in Juárez. On these two occasions, daughters were left with little chance to speak. Instead, it appeared that old discussions over daughters' choices were the main focus of concern.

Conclusion

With the aid of the cohorts, older, mature and younger women for the analysis of maquila women (with respect to non-maquila workers) in the sample, this chapter aimed to explore the spaces in which maquila workers of the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties came to meet their future partners. Data collected in Juárez revealed that the incorporation of women into modern forms of industrial employment had contributed to expanding low-income women's spaces for mate selection. Along with Integration Thesis followers, mature maquila women presented a case in which local patriarchal systems of partner selection at the household level ^(i.e. parentally-selected partners) that undermined the young woman's choices were broken down. This is clear when comparing the case of mature maquila women to the case of the senior women in the sample. Senior women's exclusion from 'modern' industrial jobs marginalised them and restricted their access to the emerging expanded maquila options to select partners away from the parental gaze. Senior women's experiences revealed how the local patriarchal system operating in their households removed control over their own preferences when it came to choosing their husbands. ^{A private form of patriarchy was clear in the reported experiences of senior} ~~The site of patriarchal control remained in the private spheres; senior~~ ^{men in the sample whose partners were selected} ~~women's preferences were undermined and undertaken~~ by parents and chaperones in the household. Such was also the case of the mature non-maquila women in the sample who met their partners in the informal sector. As target of sexual harassment

while on the job, the case of women in the informal sector confirms the predictions of Marginalisation Thesis adherents i.e. women who remain on the periphery of industrial development are subject to subordinate positions in capitalist urban centres to the detriment of their choices. For the mature women working in rural settings however, the site of patriarchal control shifted. Women working in agricultural jobs were oppressed by the local patriarchal system that made them target of sexual harassment and male violence while on the job. Finally, younger women posed an interesting case, due not only to the variety of spaces non-parentally supervised in which they came to know their partners, but also to the fact that their spaces for partner selection were closely related to their employment options. Moreover, the ease with which maquila workers reported non-conventional spaces for partner selection made it seem that as maquilas become 'institutionalised' locally, the practices of partner selection associated with this type of employment became widespread. Younger women in the sample corroborated the Integration Thesis adherents' proposition that the arrival of maquiladoras has a liberatory impact not only on the lives of maquila workers but of women in society at large. This became evident as there were instances where younger non-maquila women met their partners in dance-halls.

Whilst contributing to enhancing male/female interactions at the work place, thus prompting the emergence of relationships with greater ease than in earlier epochs, the increasing incorporation of women on the line may also have elicited new forms and sites of patriarchal control over maquila workers' choices in the area of partner selection. Whilst maquilas may be offering entertainments to ensure women's compliance with factory's rules, those same entertainments may be eroding the local forms of patriarchal power which operated in the private arena that controlled women's choices in partner selection in previous epochs and transferred them to the public arena of the workplace.

The new sites for meeting partners, maquilas and dance-halls, are not free from patriarchal forces. Integration Thesis proponents whilst highlighting the cases of mature maquila workers who experienced greater freedom to choose their partners in dance-halls, places visited with co-workers in the Seventies, would not explain the negative effects of such 'liberatory' practices. Indeed, although mature maquila women, that is the younger workers of the Seventies, had access to dance-halls, such non-conventional practice may have also made them not only the target of sexual insinuations at the entrances to dance-halls by opportunistic men (especially if dance-

halls had a motel behind their premises) and local stigma as loose women but also gave maquilas control over workers' personal choices. Likewise, contemporary younger maquila workers whilst being able to freely interact with male co-workers in dance-halls, at work, and in the neighbourhoods, due to heightened violence in the settlements, they may also experience not only greater parental surveillance over the males they can walk around with in the settlements, but also greater control from maquilas over their mate choices. In other words, whilst it is possible to suggest that some workers derived some benefits from their incorporation into maquila employment in the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties, it is also plausible to assert that new forms of patriarchal control, which shifted the site of control from the private arena to the public one, have emerged.

The final part of the chapter looked into women's responses to such changes. Interestingly, when asked about their views on non-conventional forms of partner selection, women across cohorts displayed contradictory positions. The shifting nature of their views revealed among older, mature and younger women are best explained by issues of positionality. When interviewed alone, older women and mature maquila women assumed a position as individual women, their views on their choices were seen with respect to other females locally and they referred to their experiences as they would see themselves and other individual women in their own right. The situation changed once daughters were present, their roles as individuals being taken over by those of mothers. The shifting position of respondents across the roles of workers and mothers and the resulting contradictory views provide a new dimension to the area of partner selection, as social conventions around appropriateness of some practices became very apparent. The conflict between roles and perceptions are further highlighted when seen in the light of both respondents' experiences of household labour once they became wives and their meanings of motherhood and practices of mothering once they became mothers.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Lueptow argues that ideological changes throughout the Sixties and Seventies in favour of liberation movements, coupled with emerging socio-demographic trends, shaped the behaviour of adolescent males and females in the United States. The ideological changes which occurred between 1960 and 1970 are described by Lueptow as American youth's "rejection of traditional values and institutions for individualistic goals and orientations" which in turn deemed new spaces for social interaction appropriate (Lueptow, 1984:12).

2. It is important to note, however, that for many young women of the era, the idea of getting married, even if partners were selected by their parents or chaperons, might have represented, an escape from poor treatment, strenuous work, poverty and seclusion within the household (González Montes, 1994; Peña St Martin, 1994a:302).

3. A study on a low-income settlement in Juárez published in 1974 corroborates the resemblance of Juárez social arrangements with the rest of Mexico (Ugalde *et al.*, 1974).

4. Parents' surveillance of their maquila daughters during the Seventies and responses to their daughters' behaviour are issues that are not easy to elucidate. While some scholars have emphasized greater parental surveillance of young maquila workers of the era, others throw doubt on it. Research has reported not only some parents' dislike of their maquila daughters' social life, but also that some parents visited maquila premises in order to check that the places where their daughters worked were decent (Arenal, 1989:35; Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:116). Moreover, research has also reported cases of young maquila workers who had to face furious parents in the home if they were late home from work (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:140).

5. Interestingly, research conducted on young women workers during the 1970s from central Mexico revealed not only that parents would not allow younger women go out after a certain fixed hour (usually 6 or 7 p.m.) but also that there was little resistance from daughters to such restrictions (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993:64).

6. My visits to dance-halls operating in Juárez revealed the difference between a dance-hall, a nightclub and a cantina locally. The main characteristic of dance-halls is the presence of a northern Mexican conjunto live band, something other establishments do not have. Apparently, a taste for conjunto music, a less popular musical rhythm during the 1960s has developed, in particular, though not exclusively, among low-income, young, northern Mexicans (see Peña, 1985).

7. As recent written information on dance-halls in Juárez appeared non-existent, I decided to start by tracing their pattern of growth locally. The Juárez Commerce and Industry Secretariat unfortunately registered commercial establishments under a single label which included restaurants, cantinas, nightclubs, etc including dance-halls which complicated my task somewhat. Luckily, some maquila workers pointed out that towards Christmas some dance-halls gave a big party. In expecting their clientele to attend these celebrations, most dance-halls advertised their Christmas events in local newspapers (see Figure in Annexes, p. 257 this thesis). I, therefore, started tracing December newspapers from the Seventies to the present day. Given that an incredible

multiplication of these establishments in Juárez became evident I started visiting some of them.

8. The 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. work shift appeared to be the favoured one among maquila workers in the sample. The reasons for this included safety and convenience. Moreover, mothers preferred this shift too because they felt at ease to work during children's school time.

9. Adding to the differences between dance-halls and other establishments operating locally, my visits to nightclubs and cantinas did not bear the same maquila atmosphere dance-halls did, not only because other places lacked the cheer leader calling up groups of males or females to represent their maquila brand names while dancing but because they lacked the presence of large groups of women. I also inferred that dance-halls were closely related to maquilas, or at least perceived as such, because on one occasion during my visits to the establishments, a male who approached me to talk used the question 'So, which maquila do you work for?' as an ice-breaker.

10. Finally, dance-halls were not exclusively populated by workers in their twenties or thirties. Many women maquila workers over forty also attended dance-halls. However, they appeared to prefer *their* dance-halls. That is, I discovered that there are some dance-halls heavily populated by older maquila workers such as the 'Salón Mexico' in the central parts of Juárez (see Figures in Annexes, p. 258). The implications of maquila workers' visits to dance-halls for gender roles and relations at the household level will become evident in Chapters Six and Seven.

11. The parties they referred to included one organised by the primary school and another which was an Independence day celebration.

12. Often it is a convention in research of this nature to present evidence on respondents without referring to the respondents' real names (Main name and last name). In this case, the respondents gave me permission to use their real names, so I have referred to them throughout by first name.

13. Moreover, when looking at the number of mature women who did not answer the question concerning the place where they met their husband, fewer women refused than refused to answer the question concerning boyfriends (7 out of 25 as opposed to 9 out of 25). This might either indicate the ease with which their husband selection took place or the existing stigma around young women and boyfriends, i.e. women who have many boyfriends might be stigmatised as 'loose'.

14. That is, seniority might have influenced the responses obtained. This was revealed in the interview held with Socorro, a senior woman. Upon refusing to answer the questions on courtship, she abruptly commented: "How can a young woman like you ask me that?. You shouldn't know those things." Another older respondent, Guadalupe confirmed this issue of seniority as she was very surprised that some older women had answered my questions on courtship and boyfriends.

15. Younger non-maquila women who did not answer were full-time housewives. It is plausible that they met their husbands in circumstances they felt inappropriate, like

dance-halls. However, my impression was that they were very difficult to interview as they reported that they were not used to talking about 'those things'. Moreover, their interviews were punctuated by long periods of silence.

16. This finding would probably confirm Slater and Woodside's (1951:94) findings among low-income settlers in London. Indeed, these scholars found that neighbourhoods represented a typical context in which mating among the low-income population interviewed took place.

17. I must note that not all respondents who reported having had a boyfriend stated having had a husband, not all respondents answered the question on whether the first boyfriend was the same as the first husband and not all respondents who told me where they had met their husbands told me if they had had a boyfriend prior to marriage.

18. Remaining figures for places where mature women met their first boyfriends included: at school (2), at the workplace, other than maquilas (1) and at a local party (1).

19. An interesting feature, however, was found among those younger respondents who stated having met their partners in dance-halls. They would interchangeably use maquilas and/or dance-halls in their responses as the first setting for the encounter. That is, these two places, maquilas and dance-halls, appeared to be so interlinked that it was difficult for many workers to be specific as to where exactly the first encounter took place (either first at work and then at a dance-hall or vice versa). For the purposes of this chapter, I shall use the term 'dance-halls' for all those younger workers who whilst working with males and meeting them in the maquilas, also attended dance-halls with them.

20. The remaining figures for places where mature women met their first boyfriend are: 2 reported meeting them at school dances (primary school), 1 at a local party, 1 at her workplace other than a maquila, 2 in dance-halls and 1 at secondary school. Finally, 2 met them through relatives and 9 refused to answer this question.

21. Non-maquila workers' remaining figure on place where they met partners was 1 at a party.

22. Other spaces where mature maquila women met boyfriends included parties (1 out of 9), and at work in non-maquila spaces (1 out of 9).

23. The remaining places include: two through relatives, as mentioned in the section on boyfriends, and one at a school dance.

24. Whilst only one mature non-maquila worker (1 out of 7 or 14%) reported having met her husband in the settlement where she lived, 5 (28%) mature maquila women did.

25. Specific figures for places where younger maquila women met their husband were: 34% (14 out of 41) met their husbands in dance-halls, 24% (10 out of 41) in the neighbourhood; 10% (4 out of 41) at local parties; 7% (3 out of 41) at non-maquila work places; 2% (1 out of 41) at secondary school; and 12% (5 out of 41) refused to answer.

26. Having said that, this average only refers to the 23 out of 25 mature respondents who provided this information and included only those young women who were married at the time of the interview.

27. Younger women's exact mean age when having their first child was 20.7 years.

28. Concerning women's views on this type of partner selection, whilst mature respondent, Monica, voiced great pride in the way her marital engagement had taken place despite not only the difficulties she experienced throughout her marriage but her young age at marriage, as she married when she turned 12 years old, the other younger respondent who married a parentally chosen partner seemed reluctant to express her views on the topic. Her silence on the issue led me to question whether her young age had made her accept her parents'/husband's wishes without great questioning, or whether she simply did not want to talk.

29. This was also reported by a respondent in Fernández-Kelly (1983a:182) Juárez-based study. In her words "True, she [respondent Kika] sometimes has to treat a male companion unable or unwilling to pay the entrance fee at the Malibú, one of the many popular dancing halls in Ciudad Juárez."

30. Fernández-Kelly's (1983a:139) study reports cases of interviewees who saw the Malibú as 'sleazy' and having no 'class'. However, she also mentioned other places where maquila workers went out dancing (*Ibid.*).

31. The existence of some dance-halls with a motel incorporated was corroborated by many locals, dance-halls administrators and a mature maquila worker.

32. Male co-workers on the line behaving poorly was confirmed by Cipriana, a younger worker. Cipriana's two brothers were both maquila workers at the time of the interview. Her brothers' problems with alcoholism and drug addiction had resulted in them being fired from various maquilas on many occasions.

2

CHAPTER 6

Partnered Women's Labour in the Household

This chapter examines the impact of maquila employment on partnered respondents' experiences of domestic labour. This particular area of women's labour within the household was selected because of the reported constraints domestic tasks imposed on respondents. As I became interested in this aspect of gender studies, I realised that domestic labour analysis sheds light on a significant area of contention and gender struggle: that of **"who does what within the home."** This subject area, commonly referred to as 'gender divisions of labour', has become very popular in both academic and lay publications. Following this line of scholarly research, the central query of this chapter is whether partnered women's increased participation in the maquila labour market has brought about a renegotiation of domestic responsibilities within the household. Respondents' experiences of domestic labour revealed that gender inequalities ascribe wives responsibility for the completion of domestic tasks in addition to their engagement in paid employment. However, life and work histories showed not only differences across generations of women and within each cohort but also across economic activities. The performance of domestic roles in each household came out as a compound of changeable duties, distinctively shaped by women's employment patterns and local economic circumstances modified along the life course and the domestic cycle of the households to which respondents belonged. Within this broad area of analysis, mature and younger women maquila workers showed distinct patterns.

This chapter will explore partnered respondents' experiences of household labour as these relate to maquila employment and life course factors. For that end, this chapter will use the identified age cohorts as well as the specific branches of employment, maquila and non-maquila. Thus, the first section of this chapter will concentrate on a general consideration to theoretical issues around women's labour in the home and paid employment. Next, the chapter will examine the sample and explains broad patterns of household labour, for maquila and non-maquila workers at the time of the interview. Following, it will closely consider the experiences of household labour for older, mature and younger partnered respondents in the sample, with specific focus on the case of maquila workers. Finally, the chapter will close with selected

accounts which revealed women's responses to the reported experiences of household labour for partnered maquila workers in the sample.

Wives' Employment and Domestic Labour: Conceptual Debates

For the purposes of this chapter, 'domestic work', 'household labour,' 'household chores', 'housework' and similar terms will all mean the same and will be used interchangeably to refer to routine daily tasks necessary for the general maintenance of the household, including "activities such as cleaning, tidying, buying food, cooking and sewing which makes consumption possible thanks to the skill, effort and energy expended in the transformation of a purchased commodity into a usable and consumable good" (González^z de la Rocha, 1994:174).¹ It is important to distinguish between taking responsibility for a chore (the thinking, planning, organising, administering and supervising) and its actual doing (Oakley, 1974). Given that data from Juárez revealed that the responsibility for household chores was usually placed on women this chapter will concentrate on the actual 'doing' of tasks and household tasks' distribution (i.e. whether tasks are shared among household members or carried out by the respondent alone) (Doucet, 1991). Finally, the terms 'partnered women' and 'wives' will be used interchangeably to mean women who live with a male partner in the household either married or cohabiting.²

Sociological studies on domestic labour became prominent late in the Sixties and early Seventies when scholars in the field questioned not only the inter-relationship between the spheres of home and work but the ways in which economic structures determine the differential distribution of housework. Initial attempts, derived from Parson's model (1971), viewed households in pre-industrial societies as characterised by a single process integrating both the production and reproduction sectors of society. The existing compact unity of production-reproduction within the household, this theory holds, was fractured with the advent of industrialisation, technology and capitalism. Thus, two polarised zones resulted from the transformation. The workplace, which was economic in nature and focussed on production, was separate from the other, the home, which was non-economic in nature and focused on reproduction. Wage labour was the labour of the workplace and household labour was the labour of the household. This paradigm presupposed a household model with men as breadwinners and women

as the home makers. As such Parson's model inferred that women's roles revolved around the domestic sphere of the home which comprised not only the day-to-day running and maintenance of the household, but their inherent ability to show concern and care for others (Deere and León de Leal, 1981:360). Men's role in the household, on the other hand, was considered to revolve around his capacity to economically provide for his wife and children.

This image of the urban family, as Keller (1994:2,5) explains, composed by "a stay-at-home mother and a bread winning father with their children" became the dominant sociological model of the 1950's and 1960's. Moreover, it was within this framework that the so-called 'family wage' concept emerged. The notion of the 'family wage' represented a male's working wage with which he could adequately support his 'non-working' wife and children (Land, 1980). It assumed that women would not desire or need paid work (Scott and Tilly, 1978).

Parson's idea of distinct spheres of home and work was later challenged on many grounds. General criticisms arose from the uncomplicated description it encouraged and from the fact that it assumed prevailing sexist beliefs rather than helping to illuminate and explain gender divisions of labour (Barrett and MacIntosh, 1980). As Bourne (1983:23) maintains: "[his] justification disguised the fact that the concept of the male breadwinner contained within it the male assertion of his right to have a wife perform unpaid domestic labour in his home on a full-time basis." Other criticisms arose because in the case of nuclear households it ignored cases where children and other kin take part in the completion of household tasks (Rothstein, 1995:179). In other words, it was criticised because it equated household labour with 'married women's labour' (Doucet, 1991). Finally, Parson's model was further critiqued by the reported cases of married women and mothers who entered paid employment. Indeed, his model failed to foresee the interaction between women's economic and domestic roles.

From then on, a vast range of gender-aware literature emerged which further illuminated the complex dynamics behind housework and female paid employment. Literature worldwide aiming both at making domestic work visible and at exploring whether the incorporation of women into paid employment altered their share of domestic duties and marital dynamics revealed that women's increased participation in

paid employment did not result in a corresponding reduction in women's allocated responsibilities in the domestic sphere (Beechey, 1978:186; Benería, 1982; Bose, 1987, Deere and León de Leal, 1981, 1987; Oakley, 1974; Schminck, 1977; Sharma, 1986). Thus, female waged workers remained managers, planners, organisers and supervisors of housework and child care-related activities in the home despite their incorporation into the labour market (Morris, 1990).

Contemporary research on urban centres has however suggested that women's employment might, in some instances, lead to children and male partners' greater involvement in household tasks. Whilst it may be true that such cases exist, evidence has shown that in instances where male partners do some housework, they tend to be involved in tasks that do not challenge the male breadwinner role such as food shopping and child care tasks (Hochschild and Machung, 1989; Keller, 1994:25). As Lamphere *et al.* (1993:183) put it: "within a patriarchal ideology in which men are supposed to be breadwinners, working fathers pose no cultural problem, since to be a father means to provide economic support for the family and, when he is at home, to discipline, play with and supervise the children." In other words, as partnered women have entered paid employment, some men may have increased their participation in household work but not in sufficient amounts to offset women's double shift of unpaid housework in the home and paid work outside the home. In Hochschild and Machung (1989:12) words: "[In dual earner households] husbands do more of what they rather do." Finally, women's share of household labour does not remain static as it has been acknowledged that the way household labour is allocated varies along women's life course and the domestic cycle of the households to which they belong.

To conclude not only is women's work within the home socially defined as unimportant but as Porter (1983:112) puts it: "A woman's work is always round her, except, possibly when she goes out to a paid job." Contemporary studies have therefore highlighted both the importance of research that looks into women's multiple roles (the role of caretaker of the house, the role of wife, the role of economic provider and the role of care taker of the children)³ and their interrelation. Moreover, the importance of acknowledging the diversity of women's experiences along the life cycle and the households they belong to has been recognised (Keller, 1994:6). A close look at Mexico will highlight variations and similarities with the patterns reported here.

Partnered Women's Domestic Labour in Low-Income Mexico

Research in low-income Mexico has shown that, whilst gender, as well as age, plays a determinant role in the allocation of household tasks (De Barbieri, 1989:243), the incorporation of low-income partnered women in waged activities has not meant that they are exempted from doing non-paid domestic work in the home. Working wives, just as full-time housewives, remain the main doers and administrators of household tasks (De Barbieri, 1989:243; Chant, 1991:148; Gonzáles Montes, 1994:184; Mummert, 1994:195 see also Deere, 1983:113 in rural environments). This said, research has also found that young girls, more often than not, constitute a source of help for the mother and that only under specific circumstances, if at all, male partners help, but tend to engage only in very specific "male-type" activities. Male partners who do undertake some housework see their activities as secondary, or as a favour they seldom perform for their wives (González^z de la Rocha, 1994:138). Indeed, whilst gender-ascribed roles largely confine women to the domestic domain, a close examination of evidence along the life course of partnered women revealed that wives who enter paid employment experience shifting and constantly changing household burdens.

Literature on low-income older Mexican women has revealed that whilst it is usual for daughters who remain in the household to look after their ageing mothers (Bialik, 1989:249), evidence has demonstrated that as households shrink over time, it is very likely to find "the majority of older women devoted.. to unremunerated household labour" (Sennott-Miller, 1989a:76).

Evidence on low-income Mexican married or partnered women workers, on the other hand, has shown that despite their incorporation into paid employment, women's primary role tends to revolve around responsibilities for the household which include taking care of the house, the husband and the children. In her Mérida-based sample, Peña St Martin (1994a:302) confirmed that domestic roles were primarily wives' and mothers' domain. The broader field of housework, she stated, "was the arena where [wives' and mothers'] talent to handle *things properly and efficiently* was made evident" (stress as in original).⁴ However, for partnered mature women, their incorporation into paid employment can be eased if the presence of young adolescent daughters lessens their household burdens.

Moving on to younger wives, research has demonstrated that combining waged work and housework appears to be most difficult for young wives in small households with dependent children. As Gonzáles Montes (1994:186) maintains: "This is the stage of greatest hardship and toil for a woman, [especially] if the nuclear family is on its own and none of her daughters is old enough to help out with the housework and child care." This said, research has shown cases where economic difficulties oblige wives to enter employment forcing their male partners to participate in the completion of some household tasks. It should be noted though, that, literature has also clarified that in instances when male partners perform domestic duties, their labour is, more often than not, confined to leisurely tasks such as giving companionship to a child or doing occasional food shopping (Benería and Roldan, 1987:130; González² de la Rocha, 1994). Less surprising, however, are the cases of young, partnered women workers who, in the face of great constraints, have to rely on next-of-kin (mothers, nieces, sisters, etc) as a source of child care while at work (Beneria and Roldan, 1987:131), or those who rely on young daughters' labour in order to be able to work (Chant, 1991:148,151) or those who pay another woman to do specific household tasks. An interesting question is whether the types of waged work partnered women engage in affect their share of labour in the household.

Literature on maquila workers' situation as wives have reported workers' double shift of work, inside and outside the household, especially if they have dependent children and have no access to child care (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:162, 175; Iglesias, 1985:80, 92; Reygadas, 1992). Interestingly, it appears that far from helping, male partners impose great demands on their wives' performance of household tasks. Indeed, Arenal (1989:21) presents cases of maquila women whose share of household labour decreased upon their husbands departure. As such, wives' access to maquila employment constitutes a challenge to the balancing of domestic and paid employment spheres in particular if there is a male partner in the household. Not surprisingly, maquila wives and mothers are said to "make employment choices in conjunction with their reproductive roles" (Tiano, 1994:139).

Whilst it is clear that stage in the life cycle shapes maquila women's share of domestic labour, there is little in-depth material on the gender dynamics behind maquila women's share of household labour. A close examination of maquila and non-maquila

workers in the sample across age groups sheds light on the intricate interaction between maquilas employment, gender and age dynamics, and household labour.

The Respondents in the Sample

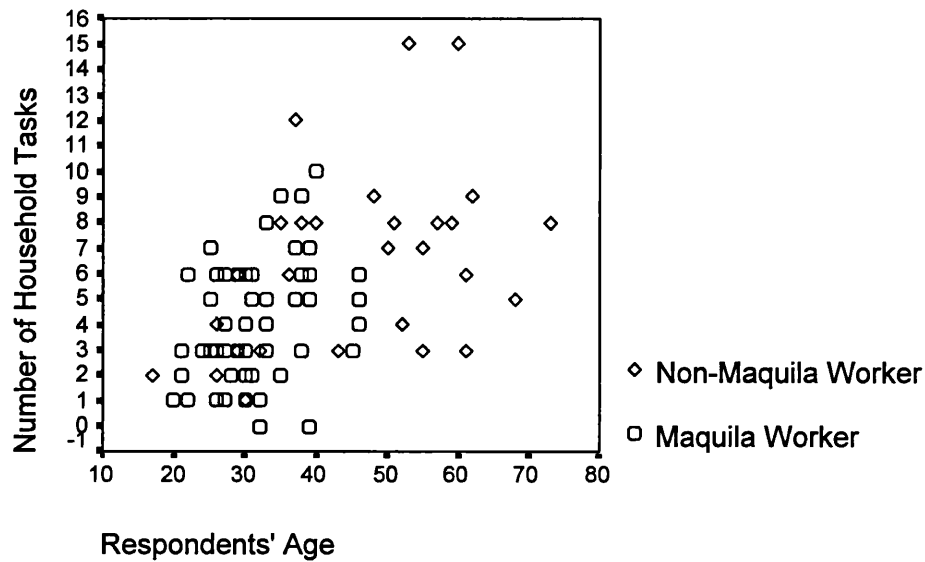
Women in the sample, maquila and non-maquila workers across age cohorts, revealed that access to the maquila formal sector of employment, whilst slightly reducing their share of household labour, did not translate either in any major relief in respondents' share of domestic work or into a re-negotiation of domestic duties.

However, variations found appeared to be largely the result of a combination of employment patterns, stage in the life course and the type of households to which respondents belonged. This section will initially explore the allocation of household labour among maquila and non-maquila workers. It will primarily assess the number of household tasks accomplished by respondents (maquila and non-maquila workers) in the sample and the share of household labour carried out by male partners living in the households where maquila and non-maquila respondents lived.

Close observation of household labour allocation for maquila and non-maquila workers in the sample revealed that whilst most women maquila and non-maquila workers did between one and ten non-shared tasks daily, two maquila workers did none. That is, two maquila respondents reported sharing all tasks with other household members, something not reported among non-maquila workers in the sample. In addition, 3 non-maquila workers reported doing between 11 and 15 tasks⁵ on their own and did not share them with anybody in the household, something maquila workers did not report. ^(see Figure 6-1) The fact that 3 non-maquila workers did ^{between 11 and} a maximum of 15 tasks deserves consideration as 1 out of the three was a woman living alone in her household. Having said that, a striking factor revealed by the data was that a few maquila workers shared some domestic tasks with male partners in the household (mostly food shopping and child care),⁶ something less often reported among non-maquila respondents. Whilst 35% (13 out of 37 partnered maquila women) lived in households where adult males did a few domestic tasks, 7% (2 out of 28 partnered) non-maquila women reported living with adult males who did very few tasks. Therefore, the bulk of domestic labour was carried out by female household members and remained constant irrespective of their status as maquila or non-maquila workers.

Figure 6.1 Number of Household Tasks

Maquila and Non-Maquila Women



Source: Household Survey, Juarez, 1996

Note the three top cases of non-maquila workers doing between 11 and 15 tasks on their own and the bottom two cases of maquila workers who did not do a single task on their own.

Older women- Housewives - Grandmothers

Older women's stories revealed that their share of domestic burdens was initially shaped by their situation as first time migrants and squatters in Juárez and later shaped by their full-time commitment to their households, their own lives and the domestic cycle of the households to which they belonged. Moreover, their marginal condition as non-paid workers, neglected by the State, ill and aged citizens, had placed many of them in a very difficult situation at the time of the interview.

Whilst the reported life-style of older women as young children and teenagers in the rural ranchos was by no means comfortable, the transition some older women made from a rural environment to an urban one posed many challenges in their lives. The area of household labour was no exception. Older women, the first urban settlers in desert places in Juárez during the Fifties and Sixties, recalled enormous household labour burdens upon their arrival in the city, in particular, those who arrived at empty plots of land to build houses.⁷

As newly arrived dwellers, older women settlers recalled hazardous living conditions and precarious housing. As a result, many elaborated greatly on experiences of immense housework loads, both inside and outside the household. Benita, for instance, moved into Juárez during the Sixties, when, with the money that her father gave her, her husband bought a small plot of land in the northern part of Juárez. Financial constraints obliged them to build a house from cardboard box and pieces of wood obtained from local waste dumps. Though she laughingly recounted her story, she recalled much worry over the weak foundations of the house. As she said: "It was so bad, a strong wind would destroy the work of weeks and with the place in the middle of the desert and as sandy as it was, starting all over again was disheartening and a very distressing experience. It was terrible."

Household tasks reported by older settlers like Benita included lighting fires to keep warm, fetching wood, collecting water from the pipes and, for those with young children, bathing them in the local ditch. Cooking, as Tila described it, was done only once a day: "With little money, we did not have much food to cook." A spoonful of cornflour diluted in boiling water with some added sugar was the only meal members of her family had each day for nearly two years. Whilst some older women settlers' initial worry was their own endurance, as children were born, their main concern shifted to

keeping the children alive. Moreover, domestic demands imposed on women settlers changed as children started to move around. Toddlers running into the ditch and into remains of fires that were still burning, respondents recalled, were just two of the many perils from which older mothers had to protect their children.⁸

The Seventies and Eighties brought dramatic changes for some older respondents in terms of household labour. With a regular supply of water and electricity, women's labour in the household decreased considerably because the tasks of water collection and lighting of fires became redundant. In addition, as their female offspring grew up, this made older women's share of household burdens increasingly easier to accomplish. Benita maintained that her daughters had been a blessing, not only because they did most of the housework, but because once they reached adulthood they contributed food and money to the household at times when her husband failed to profit from his business. Having said that, those with acute economic difficulties and no daughters in the household experienced a double shift of work, inside as housewives and outside as paid workers in the informal sector. Interestingly, those older respondents who engaged in paid employment later in their lives, reported not having considered giving up any of the chores when they joined the informal sector of the economy. In fact, all older respondents maintained that they were, and had been, full-time housewives all their lives.

Moving on to the latter part of older respondents' lives, according to some of them, old age had increased their share of household labour. Although many older women stated that things got better as they grew older, as food and shelter became more regular and public services, including pavements, transport and telephones, were gradually provided by the local municipality, old age for many of them turned out to be not only financially insecure but also very demanding in terms of household labour. From the data collected, all older respondents appeared to have been doing at least five domestic tasks daily without any help from other household members at the time of the interview. Moreover, two respondents were performing a maximum of nine full tasks daily and one reported doing fifteen per day.⁹ In some cases, caring for grandchildren for no pay was also included.

As mentioned earlier (Chapter Four), a common feature of older women's households at the time of the interview was their reduced size.¹⁰ Consequently, the

isolation felt by older women and their weak financial prospects did not present a very promising scenario. Household size did not appear to be the sole determinant of older women's burdensome domestic tasks in their old age, as in many cases, the presence of partners, sons or even daughters in the home did not represent a great deal of help. Of the 16 older women, 6 reported having a partner physically able to help, but only in one case did a respondent report her partner doing some housework (food shopping). Concerning male adult or adolescent children in the household, of the twelve cases where there were male children able to help, only in one did the respondent mention that her male children performed some tasks.¹¹ Similarly, whilst 11 out of 16 women lived with adolescent daughters who could help out with the domestic tasks, in only four cases did non-working daughters share household labour with their older mothers.

A point to bear in mind is that given the scant concern the Mexican government shows for the elderly locally, the fact that older women in this cohort did not work in the formal sector of the economy, limited their access to the provision of health and/or government-sponsored housing. These factors impacted older women's share of household labour in various ways. Male partners' lack of access to health care, children with disabilities and the respondents themselves not being eligible for social care¹², doubled some older women's labour in the household. This was due to the fact that older sick men and other dependants remained at home to be cared for by the older woman. Moreover, older women's own deteriorating health made caring activities most difficult for the older women to accomplish. Such was the case of Rosario who, not knowing that she could get pregnant late in her forties, had a child with Downs Syndrome. A difficult pregnancy plus lack of access to any form of health care meant not only that the daily care of her child was added to her domestic duties but she worried constantly that she was bringing up her child in an inappropriate manner. Concerning housing, given the weak foundations of water supplies and electricity for first-built settlements in Juárez, many respondents reported continuous failures in the provision of services.

To sum up, older women saw modifications in their share and kind of household labour over time. Housing conditions, their life course and households' domestic cycle may have determined a variation in the amount and kind of tasks performed over time. Old age too did not bring a reduction in domestic burdens as many older respondents

found themselves isolated, with little state support and weak economic stability. Based on this data it can be argued that Marginalisation thesis proponents would correctly address the situation of older women as older respondents in the sample remained peripheral to the advent of industrialisation in the city.

Mature and Younger Women as Full-Time Housewives

Contrary to the reported experiences of older women, mature and younger wives had their experiences of household labour greatly shaped by their employment patterns. However, they resembled older women in that their household structure, life course and local economic circumstances, permeated their domestic burdens in particular ways.

This section will present a combined analysis of employment patterns and life course factors. It will primarily look at the experiences of household labour for the case of wives in the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties across occupational activities.

Marriage, cohabitation and/or motherhood meant for mature and younger respondents (maquila and non-maquila workers) the beginning of a new stage in their lives, that of becoming main administrators and workers in their newly formed partnerships / families. Whilst some felt they had to continue working in the informal sector or in maquilas, others temporarily dropped out of maquilas or decided to opt for informal sector employment or maquilas for the first time. Interestingly, no mature respondents appeared to have devoted a lifetime to full-time housewifery.

Partnered mature women's reported experiences of household labour revealed a dramatic increase once they became wives. For those who became full-time housewives, the situation was particularly difficult. Two mature respondents reported having devoted the greatest share of their lives to the care of children and households. Data collected revealed that once they became housewives, the long working hours, the isolation, the lack of pay and the tense atmosphere as housewives made their experiences of household labour a major undertaking, in particular for those respondents who, as young wives, moved in with their in-laws. Vicky, a mature woman and sex worker at the time of the interview, confirmed: "As I got married very young I did not know what was expected of me living with his [her husband's] parents and siblings. It turned out to be that his relatives expected me to cook and clean for all of them. I used to cry a lot." Similarly, as a sixteen-year-old, Carmen reported having moved in

with her in-laws due to her advanced pregnancy and her family's reluctance to accept her in the parental household. She recalled experiences of heavy workloads and tension in the household as she felt she could not cope with the many chores she was expected to complete. Not only did Carmen report a difficult pregnancy, but also continuous recriminations by other household members about her being 'lazy' during her stay there. At the time of the interview, Carmen, her husband and three children no longer lived with her in-laws and had a separate place in a low-income settlement in Juárez. Nonetheless, she continued to do the bulk of domestic duties with little help from her husband. Even those respondents who had not moved in with their in-laws, but lived only with their husband and children, experienced hard times. Mature respondent and street seller, Monica, married her partner when she was twelve-years-old and he was fourteen. Monica mentioned that marriage was a very hard test for any young woman due to the multiple household activities young women had to learn and the demands imposed when nurturing young children.

The commonality of experiences reported by full-time housewives suggests that as full-time, non-paid workers within the household, heavy work loads, long schedules and very little recognition was the usual recorded household labour experience.¹³ As such their experiences resembled those of senior women in the sample. Similarly their experiences can be explained by Marginalisation Thesis followers as these women remained peripheral to capitalist development.

Mothers/Wives in the Informal Sector

Domestic work, sex work and home-based production were the informal sector employment options mature women reported when becoming working wives. Beyond specific details on each option, the most reported reason as to why respondents chose the informal sector included the flexibility of schedules as it allowed them to earn an income and accomplish as many household tasks as if they were full-time housewives. Indeed, evidence from mature respondents confirmed their experiences as double-shift full-time workers. As both the managers and doers of household chores in their own households, and paid workers in the informal sector, the bulk of labour was the second shift in a life with two full-time jobs.

Mature workers, Marina and Agustina, mentioned that however poorly paid and

non-residential
unstable, ~~out-living~~ domestic work can be a viable economic alternative for the survival of married women. Marina started working as a domestic servant when she turned twelve years of age and continued working in that job throughout her marriage and motherhood. As a young housewife and ~~out-living~~ *live-out* domestic worker, she would arrive home to continue with her full-time commitment to domestic tasks. This was also the case for Agustina, an ironing woman, who reported that although she felt she should contribute to the household income pool, her husband and other household members expected her to continue with her role as a full-time housewife. Undoubtedly, her work in the informal sector posed other household members and especially her male partner no problem for her role as a full-time housewife as long as she remained in the household at times when he/they required her to do so. Similarly, maquila worker Blanca, dropped out of maquilas when she got married so as to comply with her husband's wishes. Economic need may have forced her to sell products from home. As an independent seller, her husband found no reason to challenge her employment as she remained inside the household. Not only did Blanca earn some money but she also performed the many domestic tasks as though she was a full-time, non-employed housewife.¹⁴

Having said that, not all women in desperate economic need found it easy to reconcile working in the informal sector with their household duties. Mature respondent, Isabel, reported having secretly continued working as a domestic servant when she married her second husband. On one occasion her husband unexpectedly came back from work and as she was not in the home, upon her arrival, he violently demanded that she remain inside the home. While she mentioned that economic need was the only reason that prompted her hidden employment she also recalled great distress over the burden of accomplishing tasks both outside and inside the household.¹⁵

Notwithstanding, those who were able to earn a wage at the same time as being full-time housewives might have experienced that the numerous tasks to accomplish inside the household, as full-time housewives, and paid workers could sometimes be lessened as women and households moved along their course and households' domestic cycle. This was clear in the case of mature workers like Blanca, who set up her business at home, and Marina, a domestic servant. Blanca's story revealed that, once grown, her children appeared to have been of great help not only with household

chores but with her home business. She stated that once her children grew up, the enormous workloads they imposed on her disappeared. Not only did Blanca report not having to closely supervise her children any more but that her children willingly helped her to clean the place and wash-up, in particular her young daughter, Janet, who was aged twelve at the time of the interview.¹⁶ Moreover, Blanca also reported that they were a great source of help with her business. Among the tasks that Blanca mentioned they performed, were preparing coffee for customers ^{waiting for} expecting Blanca if she was busy or was not at home and, occasionally, washing up. Similarly, Marina's daughter, Claribel, aged fifteen at the time of the interview, could take care of many household chores if her mother was not in the house. Again, mature sex worker, Isabel, also found in her female adult children a great source of help with the household chores while she worked outside the household. She reported having very difficult times when the children were young. However, as her children grew she reported sharing most domestic tasks with her adolescent daughters and other household members. In fact, Isabel's only household task, at the time of the interview, was cooking. Her daughters, the eldest of whom was twenty at the time of the interview, ran the household day and night when their mother was out working.

Children growing up was not the only blessing for mature women in the informal sector. A husband's departure appeared to have meant, in some cases, relief from household labour for the respondent. Mature domestic worker, Marina, reported that in her forties there had been a further reduction in household tasks upon her husband's death, when her mother moved in with her. Grandmother, mother and daughter, made the many domestic tasks that once fell on Marina's shoulders alone much easier to complete.

To sum up, the informal sector, as an economic alternative for married women and mothers appeared to reinforce the patriarchal system where women's main role as wives and mothers persisted despite their incorporation into the labour market. Embracing the flexibility of schedules and the income of the informal sector of the economy put mature women in a situation where they had to fulfil their partners' ideal of being full-time housewives while responding to great financial difficulties. That is, their share of household chores remained intact, as if they were solely engaged in full-time housewifery. Far from doing any domestic work, partners, demanded from their wives

'efficient' completion of household chores. Not surprisingly, those respondents whose partners had left the household, appeared to have experienced great domestic labour relief. On the other hand, women's reported experiences of household labour were by no means static as they were largely shaped by household structure, life and domestic cycle. Grown children and particularly daughters were seen by women as a blessing, and a major source of help with the household chores. Whilst the experiences of household labour for mature women in the informal sector varied along the life course, these can be explained by Marginalisation Thesis followers as these women remained peripheral to capitalist development.

Service Sector Wives

Younger workers, María Jesús and Lourdes reported working in the service sector as wives and their stories varied according to the type of jobs they held. For instance, younger respondent María Jesús, the least educated of the three service sector workers in the sample mentioned that when she got married, her husband who worked for a dance-hall did not let her continue working for maquilas. She then resorted to cooking in a local restaurant. Whilst she complained about the poor wages and the long and tiring schedules in the restaurant, she said that she did not consider returning to maquila employment to avoid marital conflict. When she separated from her husband, with four dependent children she continued working for the restaurant. At the time of the interview, she was considering applying for a better-paid job in a large maquila. Concerning household labour, as a worker in a restaurant, María Jesús arrived home in the afternoon only to have to undertake domestic duties. However, she felt very fortunate that her mother continuously visited her and contributed enormously to completion of the household tasks. When asked whether she, as a worker in the service sector, felt any difference concerning her share of household labour to the situation if she worked in the maquilas, she said that less money always meant more labour in the household. The fixed minimum local wages in the service sector, she added, compared poorly to the extra bonuses paid in large maquilas, i.e. those that provided additional payments gave workers with access to them a better chance to reduce their labour burdens in the household. In other words, the fact that some maquilas provided workers with additional bonuses enabled them to afford household electrical appliances, leading

to a reduction in domestic labour. She emphasized that hoovers, mixers and fridges did lessen household labour. However, she also reported that working in small maquilas that pay minimum wages with no bonuses, would not make much difference compared to the emerging service sector, as far as household labour was concerned.

On the other hand, as a primary school teacher, Lourdes' greatest relief was to see her child attending the same ^{Kindergarten} ~~kindergarten~~ she worked for. Moreover, access to better wages had allowed her not only to buy electrical appliances for efficient completion of household chores but to move to an INFONAVIT settlement in the southern part of the city which gave her access to better provision of public services (see Chapter Two). She reported being very fortunate as she could not only look after her child whilst earning some money but also because on occasions she could pay a child minder.

To sum up, based on these data it appears that service sector workers who attained higher education and better paid jobs had the opportunity to lessen their share of household tasks.¹⁷ However, those with secondary education or less may have seen little difference in their share of household labour from other jobs available locally. An interesting point is that none of these respondents mentioned their partners' objecting to their employment in the service sector. This said, Lourdes' teaching job in a kindergarten may not have posed a great challenge to her ascribed duties in the household, especially as she took her daughter with her to work. Although service sector workers remained in a minority in the sample (see Chapter Four) and indeed in Juárez as a whole (see Chapter Three), they posed an interesting case. Whilst those with access to better paid jobs can be said to be Integrated due to the associated gains to access electrical appliances which in turn may facilitate the efficient completion of domestic tasks, service sector workers can also be said to be Exploited as these respondents, despite their engagement in paid employment outside the home, remained main doers of domestic tasks.

Maquila Wives' Experiences of Household Labour

Heavy workloads, tiredness and difficulties coping with the domestic burdens awaiting them at home were the experiences recalled by mature and younger maquila workers as they became wives, partners and/or mothers in the Seventies. Most felt

anxious about not being able to fulfil their expected roles in the household. Indeed, seeing the chores piling up as a result of the fixed schedules imposed by work on the line, in particular if their children were very young, their partners inadequate, as most were, and financial difficulties acute, translated into great overloads and physically draining conditions. Indeed, a common pattern that emerged across the two generations of maquila wives/mothers in the sample was the fact that sharp financial difficulties appeared to have affected women's share of household labour in a way not reported before. Economic need obliged partnered maquila women to take every extra monetary paid bonus in maquilas, extending their working hours whilst also prompting them to watch their spending. Not surprisingly, many found that the long shifts, sometimes with little food intake, decreased their ability to complete domestic tasks once in the household. This, in turn, proved to be a source of anxiety and distress. Younger worker, Dora Estela, described her experiences: "As I got married I needed every peso.... it was the first time I really paid attention to the production standards..I needed every single extra-bonus paid." Arriving home exhausted made it even more difficult for Dora Estela to cope with her second shift in the household. As put by mature worker, María Lourdes: "It is the tiredness of being on the line all day that makes me 'slow' when I come home to face my husband's demands, the children and all the mess."

A reported anxiety shared by all maquila wives with dependent children, was the lack of proper factory child care arrangements. Those workers who had access to child care considered they were fortunate. Child care arrangements ranged from factories themselves, respondents' mothers, neighbours, next-of-kin or privately paid child minders. Indeed, those mature and younger workers who had their mothers around, like Teresa and Dora Estela, may have found some relief as they could continue their role as providers without the worry of having to leave their child with 'strangers'. As mature worker, Teresa, mentioned: "It sounds ridiculous but it was only when I had my baby that I realised how bad things were for married women with children in the maquilas." Moreover, the Nineties have not seen any major improvements in the factories concerning child care.

So far, the situation of maquila wives could be explained by The Exploitation Thesis proponents who would state that wives' incorporation into assembly jobs deepened patriarchal authority and acquiescence to traditional female roles. The double

burden of having to work extra hours on the line and extended shifts in the home, they would argue, only stressed the double exploitation that women maquila workers endure. This, they would maintain, is clearly seen in the pressure wives feel to comply with the female ascribed role as wife while also being a worker. Having said that, a close look at the specific cases of maquila wives may disclaim some of the Exploitation thesis arguments in favour of the Integration Thesis claims. Indeed, whilst the above characteristics appeared to be a common experience across most maquila wives (mature and younger), particular characteristics were found across selected groups of mature and younger maquila workers in the sample.

For instance, an interesting pattern of household labour appears to emerge among women who became first-time maquila workers later in life. After a long period as full-time housewives, joining the maquilas appeared to have been a difficult routine to adjust to. Socorro, Adela and Martha, mature respondents and maquila workers at the time of the interview, joined the maquilas later in life when their children were grown up and financial difficulties sharpened. Socorro, a mature woman, for instance, started to work nine years after she got married, when her husband's severe alcoholism forced her to consider paid employment outside the household. She recalled distress and anger as she wanted to be in the household to accomplish the household tasks as she had done when she was a full-time housewife. Her housework did not stop, once on the line. Apparently, Socorro would run from the maquila back home during her lunch break to cook and serve her children and husband, if he was at home. Moreover, partners' role in shaping maquila wives' work patterns became most clear when closely examining household dynamics and those relate to maquila wives' patterns of employment.

Mature respondent, Paty, for instance, had re-entered the maquilas at least seven times since she got married. Paty explicitly mentioned a particular pattern of behaviour in her partner: "When I am at home [as a full-time housewife] he is pleased but bothers me that I should not go out, that there is no money, that the house should be clean and the food ready. When I am working in maquilas, he is annoyed all the time because I work for maquilas. But funny he doesn't complain even if everything is in a mess in the house or if the food is not good." Similarly, younger worker, Telma Angelica, mentioned that whenever she was working in the maquilas her partner would not complain about household chores however piled up they were. But, as a full-time

housewife, her partner would check food and cleanliness standards. As she put it: "Can you imagine? As a worker I used to hang around with the chavalas [young females] in the maquila after the work shift. He wouldn't say anything. But as a full-time housewife he gets very annoyed if I'm not here in the house all the time." In other words, according to these data, it appears that male partners' control over their maquila wives was heightened in instances when the respondent remained in the household, clearly seen through partners' highlighted demands over wives' efficient completion of household chores. Once economic need forced the women into the maquilas, there was a reduction in the control male partners had over these respondents, reflected in decreasing demands over the completion of household chores. The fact that some maquila men have, though reluctantly, started to lessen demands on their maquila working wives and to do some male-type domestic tasks, would most likely be interpreted by Integration Thesis proponents as a sign of liberation and an improvement on the situations described by non-maquila workers in the sample. This said, not all partnered maquila wives reported similar experiences. For example Adela's husband's irritability over her work in maquilas became obvious once she started to work for the first time in maquilas and appeared clear in his demands for efficient completion of household tasks. Adela's incorporation in the maquilas was the result of her husband's work-related accident which left him unable to provide economically for the household. Adela mentioned that her husband's objection to the maquilas and irritability was clear to her in his expressed demands concerning household labour. As she stated: "He gets angry if I arrive late. It is because I arrive in the afternoon, after my work in the maquilas. He wants me here in the house as it was before. But he wouldn't tell me that. He would instead shout at me if the soup was cold. But I know he is angry because I work in maquilas." An interesting point to note is that whilst Pati and Telma Angelica, maquila workers who reported reduced burdens in the household when working for maquilas, shared long employment histories prior to their marriage, Adela did not. In fact, Adela's incorporation into maquilas occurred later in life, many years into her marriage. It may then be suggested that those partnered maquila workers with long working histories in maquilas prior to or during marriage have different experiences of household labour to those partnered workers who joined the maquilas later in life. The reason may lie in the adjustment undergone within the household. It may be that for

wives who start a maquila employment history early in marriage, male partners, in the face of financial difficulties, come to accept both the challenge to their roles as main breadwinners and the economic benefits of their wife's temporary insertion in the maquila labour market on the grounds not only of financial need but due to male partners' perceived temporality of their wives employment. I would argue that sporadic reductions in male partners' demands regarding the efficient completion of household chores are largely tempered by the economic situation in the household. Once the crisis is over it is likely that the male partner will demand that his wife returns to the household as a full-time housewife until financial difficulties become sharp again, re-starting this cycle of employment. This argument was confirmed by the experience of a younger worker Leti who left the maquilas for the first time when she was nineteen. She reported having done so in order to comply with her partner's wishes and thus avoid marital conflict. As time went by, he could not afford to provide for the household and, therefore, required her to re-enter the maquilas. Leti's income from the maquilas meant not only an improvement in the economic situation in the household but a reduction in her share of household chores for various reasons. Leti's income allowed her to buy a fridge and an electric cooker which meant that she did not have to continuously visit her sister's place to store goods in her fridge. Moreover, as a first-time maquila worker she recalled occasions when her partner stayed at home with the children¹⁸, and times when he felt he had to buy the milk and bread while she was on the line, something Leti had not seen him doing before. Months later, however, she felt that her partner was continuously annoyed with the situation until finally, he demanded that she stop working. This situation, Leti reported, had been repeated endlessly. At the time of the interview, Leti was a full-time housewife and felt she had the entire bulk of the domestic work on her shoulders. Moreover, she seemed very anxious over her household's financial difficulties.

On the other hand, those small nuclear households where both spouses worked as assembly workers at the time of the survey (6 in total) also showed interesting negotiations. Martha, Rosa, Laura and Leticia, younger respondents who reported living in small nuclear households, appeared to share some household tasks with their partners. Whilst in reality, male maquila partners may have taken a reactive rather than pro-active strategy, their share of housework appeared to be slightly larger than that of

other male partners in other households at the time of the interview. The reason, Martha, a younger maquila worker explained, was apparently because "under the circumstances they [male partners/husbands] have to do something. We [maquila wives] can't possibly cope with it all." Household tasks male maquila partners have undertaken included child care and food shopping. The Integration Thesis proponents would at this point highlight the better than nothing scenario and would argue that maquila couples clearly reflect a slight move towards greater equality between the sexes. This situation deserves consideration however since it appeared to be that as the respondent leaves the household for her morning maquila shift, the task reported as 'child care' carried out by male partners and reported by these respondents might well be male partners' duty to remain in the household with the very young children. In such circumstances, it is highly unlikely that the quality of child care given by the father would match that of the mother. Food shopping, a task reported as being shared with partners, also deserves analysis. Bringing food home does not appear to pose any major threat to the stereotypical male breadwinner role. Moreover, it sustains, if not reinforces the local patriarchal ideology reflected in the commonly used expression that 'the man belongs to the street and the woman to the house'. Seen in this context, there is no reason why men would not find food shopping a suitable task to undertake under special circumstances. This, Exploitation Thesis followers would interpret as the resilience of patriarchy in shaping women's lives.

Interestingly, this pattern was not found among those younger maquila couples living with mothers-in-law. Indeed, Araceli and María de los Angeles' stories reflected their partners' idle reaction when there is a grandmother in the household. Apparently, Araceli and María de los Angeles' mothers were performing the lion's share of domestic tasks when the respondent was not in the household. Tasks undertaken by grandmothers in no way resembled those undertaken by male partners living in small nuclear households. Not only did grandmothers undertake child care, they also did the cooking, washing up, clothes sewing and sometimes food shopping for the household while the respondent arrived home to continue with child care duties and cooking. Male partners, on the other hand, arrived from the line to rest.

To sum up, mature and younger maquila mothers and wives may have faced interesting challenges to their roles as full-time carers and doers of housework in their

households. The rigidity of the schedules, the tiring activities and the financial difficulties combined to pose threats to women workers', and their partners' ideas on women's duty to complete the household chores. On the other hand, husbands/partners revealed surprising reactions. Whilst some partnered maquila women reported that their incorporation into maquilas had meant a slight relief in household labour as a result of their partners relaxing domestic demands, others found household burdens increasingly difficult to cope with. In fact, marital conflict following their insertion and re-insertion into the maquilas made some wives decide to quit their jobs. Irritability of mature and younger women's male partners over their wives' incorporation in maquilas might be explained by various factors: first, husbands' failure to provide economically for the household; second, their wives' ability to become the main providers; and third, the local stigma around maquila wives. That is, that 'maquila workers boss their husbands around' and/or 'maquila wives do what they feel like'.¹⁹ Those mature women who joined the maquilas later in life revealed great anxiety over adjusting to the conflicting roles of being workers in the maquila sector with fixed wages and schedules, and being full-time housewives. These issues point to a possible challenge to women's main role as full-time housewives. Indeed, the rigidity of maquilas employment and the increasing need for an extra income in the households forced women and their partners to confront in a bolder manner the incompatibility of women's full-time employment in maquilas and full-time housewifery, something not as clear with workers in the informal sector. Having said that, the responsibility for the completion of the main bulk of domestic duties remained on women's shoulders despite their incorporation into paid employment, maquilas and non-maquilas. On the whole, it can be said that the maquila mothers of the Seventies reported very similar challenges to their 'main' role as organisers and performers of household tasks to maquila wives and mothers of the Eighties and Nineties and that the contention between Exploitation and Integration thesis proponents remained unsolved.

The complex interlinking of maquila employment and women's labour within the home is explained by Iglesias (1985:67): "traditionally Mexican women have not had a solid presence in the capitalist labour market due to the male domination which takes place in and outside the household reinforcing and sustaining women's economic and sexual subordination."

The final section of this chapter will look at respondents' views on maquila wives' experiences of household labour.

Conversations with individual groups of women revealed that maquila workers are believed to shoulder a greater share of household labour than non-maquila workers and even housewives. Indeed, older women when individually interviewed whilst recognising the benefits of having a fixed income of their own, were emphatic about the difficulties the maquila workers endure in trying to cope with the many chores and multiple activities required of them as workers, wives and mothers. Their views resembled those of non-maquila mature women who showed sympathy for mature maquila wives. Mature maquila women, on the other hand, reported the associated problems of not being able to complete the bulk of domestic duties, in particular if financial difficulties were acute and young children and male partners were in the household. Many confirmed instances where the inadequacy of partners had led to marital conflict and break up. When confronting older women with their daughters over the question 'who do you think had it worse, older women or maquila wives, workers of the Seventies, in terms of household labour?', older women, stated that they themselves and women of their era had it worse than the first generation of maquila workers. They recalled their experiences as newly arrived migrants in Juárez, building houses and bringing up children under extremely hazardous circumstances. They highlighted the improved services and facilities maquila daughters of the Seventies had, something older women of their era had no access to. Mature maquila women on these occasions felt quite free to respond and stated they themselves did not have it easy either. They stressed the difficulties of being wives or partners, and raising offspring while also working on the line. They highlighted the lack of bonding with locals due to heightened levels of violence, something newly arrived female settlers of the Fifties and Sixties did not experience or experienced to a lesser degree.

Concerning younger women, when interviewed with their mothers, mature mothers on this occasion explained that maquila daughters of the Eighties and Nineties had it much better than they themselves did in the Seventies. This, mature maquila mothers stated was not only due to the improved facilities in maquilas of the Eighties and Nineties but also because men have better employment prospects than they did in the past. This, in turn, they considered gave contemporary maquila wives the

opportunity to improve their financial circumstances and care for the children in the household. Undoubtedly, two steady incomes and access to social security for young dependent children was regarded as an economic opportunity maquila couples of the Nineties had much easier access to, than maquila mothers' dependent children of the Seventies. Whilst younger maquila women on these occasions did not refute their mothers, when individually interviewed they expressed anxiety over the employment prospects in Juárez, male partners' constraints over their employment outside the home, violence in the settlements and the difficult financial scenario for mothers of young children of their generation.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the experiences of household labour for respondents in the sample with special focus on partnered women. It explored the cases of partnered older, mature and younger women, maquila and non-maquila respondents and their share of housework as they moved along their life course and the domestic cycle of the households to which they belonged. Data on older women revealed that in tune with Marginalisation Thesis followers, the advent of industrialisation contributed to making women perpetual full-time dependent housewives, responsible for domestic reproduction. Leaving their next-of-kin behind as younger wives and mothers, once in the city, older women experienced household labour burdens closely associated with capitalist forms of gender division of labour present in urban nuclear households. The economic dependence and precarious conditions these women faced translated into hardship for them. In other words, Marginalisation thesis proponents would correctly address the situation of older women as older respondents remained peripheral to the advent of industrialisation in the city.

When observing the case of mature and younger maquila wives in the light of the theories in contention it becomes difficult to decide between the Exploitation and Integration Thesis.

The Exploitation Thesis proponents would explain the situation of maquila wives, stating that wives' incorporation into assembly jobs deepened patriarchal authority and acquiescence to traditional female roles. The double burden of having to work extra hours on the line and extended shifts in the home, they would argue, only stressed the

double exploitation that women maquila workers endure. This, they would maintain, is clearly seen in the pressure wives felt to comply with the female ascribed role as wife while also being a worker.

The Integration Thesis proponents, on the other hand, would highlight the better than nothing scenario and would argue that maquila couples clearly reflect a slight move towards greater equality between the sexes. The fact that some maquila men have, though reluctantly, started to lessen demands on their maquila working wives and to do some male-type domestic tasks, would most likely be interpreted as a sign of liberation and an improvement on the situations described by non-maquila workers in the sample. This, Exploitation Thesis followers would find unconvincing, given the minimal changes in the past 30 years in export-led growth. They would emphasize the resilience of patriarchy and the strength of capitalism in shaping women's lives.

Whilst it is likely that maquila wives experienced a reduction in male partners' demands in their efficient completion of household chores, an emerging form of control however emerged from wives increasing need to remain on the line. Economic need in the face of acute financial difficulties in the households obliged partnered respondents to stay longer hours on the line so as to earn extra monetary payments. Moreover, upon arriving home partnered maquila women did not arrive to rest but to continue with household chores. In other words, whilst women maquila wives experienced a reduction in the patriarchal demands coming from male partners in the area of household labour, it also meant giving capital greater control over their labour.

Perhaps at this point an analysis of women's views may add an extra dimension to the struggle of these forces in the lives of women. The inter-generational discussions on household labour showed clearly women's subscription to the *marianismo* ideology of suffering, self-sacrificing, mothers and wives. Women appeared to gain strength from their hard experiences of household labour in the home. That was the case with senior women who assumed a similar positioning both as individuals and as mothers when interviewed in front of their daughters. Likewise mature maquila women who mentioned having made sacrifices for the benefit of the family, presented their own abnegation in a manner that depicted their own endurance as nearly competing with that of their mothers. On this occasion, senior women as well as mature women's individual perceptions did not conflict with the roles they had wanted them to assume in front of

their mothers and for the same reason, whilst their views openly clashed, they did not show any shame in stating them quite openly. Young maquila daughters, on the other hand, when confronted in front of their mothers, shifted their roles from being single mothers to being daughters. This was clear as they did not openly manifest their need for a role as wives. This may have been the result of their youth which may not have allowed them to so strongly feel the pressure to get married. Moreover, by residing in the parental household, their role as daughters had been greatly reinforced. Finally, it is also possible that a new generation of maquila workers is resisting patriarchal demands on them that push them into marriage early in their adolescence. Lack of inter-generation data with married daughters whilst opening some avenues for research also oblige me to leave the question unanswered. The next chapter will expand on a central role for all respondents in the sample, that of being mothers.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Another category of work which is distinct from housework is household work. This includes what Pahl refers to as the sphere of "self-provisioning" which is the production and consumption of goods and services undertaken by household members for themselves (Pahl and Wallace, 1985). In general terms, tasks for self provisioning include vegetable growing, household maintenance, the production of food and beverages (i.e. jam or wine), and sewing or knitting clothes. These tasks go beyond the routine tasks of daily household maintenance to include the wider notion of 'household work strategy'. While this third category of work is important, the chapter focuses more specifically on the two first categories which are housework and child care.

2. It should be noted that whilst data was also collected on single women's experiences of household labour, those were left out of the thesis for various reasons: first because the sample contained a greater proportion of partnered women (among maquila and non-maquila respondents); second, because in the particular case of mothers, single or married, a chapter on motherhood included their accounts; and finally, because constraints of time and space did not allow me to include any more data.

3. Women's roles as economic provider and mother and their interconnection will be closely looked at in the Chapter Seven.

4. Such findings have led scholar Sylvia Chant to believe that the nuclear household "is most supportive of dominant gender ideologies, a rigid sexual division of labour...and a correspondingly greater degree of male control over their wives' labour power." This was revealed in her central Mexico based findings both on women in female headed households (Chant, 1991:150) and mature women in extended families (Chant, 1985a:22) where women shared household tasks with other household members and had more relative freedom to join the labour market.

5. These household tasks included: food shopping, cooking breakfast, cooking lunch, cooking supper, doing washing-up, cleaning the place, washing clothes, clearing the entrance or backyard (sand, dust, etc), looking after children in the morning, looking after children in the afternoon, looking after children at night, looking after children during the week-ends, feeding animals (pets), caring for the sick, and occasionally sewing clothes.

6. Of the total 57 male partners, 51% (29) were reported to carry out some domestic duties. Of those 29, 86% (or 25) were reported to help with food shopping and 41% (12) with child care and 8 did both tasks.

7. Their arrival at newly-forming urban sites, on the other hand, also meant that interactions with other newcomers, in particular other women, were easily established. Indeed, older respondents mentioned that, unlike in ranchos, women and children found it easy to make new friends. This, in turn, may have made a very strenuous and arduous time a more bearable experience. Sharing scarce resources and the undertaking of burdensome tasks may have created alliances among women settlers which allowed for future collaborative engagement in local struggles for public services, and against local violence (for a similar case in Monterrey, see Bennett, 1995).

8. Benita, for instance, found her youngest child drowned in the ditch when he was 2 years old and she recalled many other women suffering similar misfortunes.

9. The 15 tasks I refer to here are: food shopping, cooking breakfast, cooking lunch, cooking supper, doing washing-up, cleaning the place, washing clothes, clearing the entrance or backyard (sand, dust, etc), looking after children in the morning, looking after children in the afternoon, looking after children at night, looking after children during the week-ends, feeding animals (pets), caring for the sick, and occasionally sewing clothes for household members (mending buttons, zips, etc.).

10. Of the total 16 women in this cohort, 50% (8) lived in households comprising three people (including the respondent) or less. Some mentioned that their adult children who departed had either crossed to the States in search of a better life or moved south of the city where employment and better housing appeared to be more readily available.

11. This case deserves attention as the respondent was not only the eldest in the cohort (70-years-old), but had a very bad sight and had no daughters or female kin she could rely on. Not surprisingly, her sons did some cooking and sewing to meet their individual needs.

12. An alarming case was that of Socorro who, despite her friends' warning of her need for medical care for her advanced diabetes, could not afford to go to the doctor and instead continued to eat sweets and drink sweet beverages, due to her continuous cravings for sugar.

13. This finding however may not be that particular to housewives in Juárez but to full-time housewives from other low-income places in the world as well.

14. In being quite flexible with income earnings and schedules, scholars have found that the informal sector allows women to have a secondary role as income providers and a main role as household managers (González de la Rocha, 1994:172). It enables women, as Levine and Sunderland Correa (1993:83) put it, "to maintain the fiction that the husband's support is adequate."

15. For low-income women who confront dire economic need, entering paid employment forces them to, voluntarily or involuntarily, resort to balancing strategies which allow them to fulfil their duties as workers both outside and inside the household. In fact, cases are reported where, far from helping, male partners control working women's 'efficient' performance of household chores and if disappointed they may attempt to prohibit their wives' entrance into paid employment. This, García and De Oliveira (1994:141) maintain, usually leads to marital conflict and negotiation, especially under circumstances of great financial difficulties. As Chant (1991:150) puts it: "If wives can demonstrate that the housework will still be done and the children will not suffer undue neglect, there are stronger grounds for persuading husbands to let them take a job." Roldán (1988) explains this phenomenon stating that men may oppose their wives' paid employment outside the household because it threatens prevailing gender roles which ascribe women the maintenance of the household and men the provision of the main income for the household. That is, "in men's views, wives are unable to take proper care of the house, the children, and themselves if they [wives] work [for an income outside

the home]” (Roldán, 1988:239).

16. Blanca's children's ages at the time of the interview were as follows: Janet, aged 12, Alejandro, aged 11, and Carlos aged 10.

17. This area of the service sector with better paid jobs deserves careful attention and further research. Given that I concentrated solely on low-income settlements in Juárez, the study did not explore cases of former maquila workers who moved out of low-income settlements to middle income housing. This may have been the case for those who managed to attain higher college education while working as assembly workers. More research is needed in this direction.

18. Sandra Arenal's (1989:93) compilation confirms this finding as she found cases of maquila workers' husbands who, on occasions undertook some household tasks, namely child care.

19. As stated in the inter-generational discussions that took place with Leti and Pati and their mother.

CHAPTER 7

Mothers' Concepts of Motherhood and Practices of Mothering

The last area of women's lives to be considered in this thesis is respondents' concepts of motherhood and practices of mothering. This area was selected because motherhood was reported by most respondents as being their most fulfilling role. This was clear not only in the amount of time women spent 'talking' about their children but also in the satisfaction, as well as emotional drain, respondents experienced in relation to their offspring. Moreover, data collected on this issue revealed that whilst the concepts of motherhood remained central to all respondents, their practices of mothering varied according to their life, domestic cycle and employment patterns. Resulting practices of mothering across generations of maquila and non-maquila workers challenged views which regarded mothering as an experience exclusively belonging to the private sphere of the home and instead encompassed wage earning as well as caring and nurturing their offspring. Moreover, data from Juárez revealed that while maquila respondents considered motherhood the most important role in their lives, their practices faced outright opposition by state family agencies and the local Catholic Church.

This chapter will present older, mature and younger, maquila and non-maquila mothers' practices of child rearing as they relate to their employment patterns. An analysis of contemporary debates around workers' roles as mothers and their associated practices of mothering will pave the ground for the presentation of corresponding research findings. Maquila workers' accounts of their mothering in relation to non-maquila women in the identified age cohorts revealed the emergence of counter trends to conventional mothering. The chapter will close with a consideration of women's responses to contemporary maquila workers' childrearing practices.

Theoretical Considerations: Motherhood and Employment

For the purposes of this thesis, motherhood will be understood as a socially and historically constructed concept, which is not biologically determined, but a constantly changing concept that allocates women the role of caring for and nurturing their offspring (Hays, 1996: x). Indeed, much of the existing research on motherhood, as a

concept, and on mothering, the practice, has revealed the widely-held belief that women are responsible for human reproduction (Moore, 1996:73). It is then assumed that mothers bear the responsibility for nurturing and caring for their children, activities which involve the preservation, and training of children for adult life (Ruddick, 1989). While images of the biological mother as the sole and exclusive caretaker appear to be the dominant model, feminist scholarship has long challenged fixed notions of mothering. Variants on the practices of mothering across groups of women have, therefore, begun to be of central concern (Blum and Deussen, 1996; Chang, 1994;). Mothering, Glenn (1994:3) maintains, has been subject to essentialist interpretation on the grounds of the reproductive function it entails. Diverse practices across groups of women, she continues, are observable through what she calls "distillations of women's experiences." Definitions of motherhood, centred on biological mothers' duty to care for their children, can and do involve a wide range of practices, involving specific strategies, what Arlie Hochschild (1992:430) terms 'gender strategies', and operate to adjust conventional gender ideologies of motherhood to the mothers' circumstances. Thus, it is often the case that the ways in which women construct their own mothering are "constrained by and transcend the constructed oppositions of public-private." Within the context of emerging meanings of motherhood, low-income urban working mothers' practices of 'good mothering' have become a growing area of enquiry.

Gender-aware literature in the area of female paid employment and women's life course has questioned whether low-income mothers' income earning activities are (or are not) reconcilable with their mothering. Thus, literature which explores the dynamics of home and work for working mothers can be said to have subscribed either to what I have labelled the compatibility with employment model or the incompatibility with employment model. Indeed, whilst some suggest that the advent of industrialisation and urbanisation across cultures and, more specifically, women's access to paid employment, have contributed to a re-negotiation to the conventional practices of mothering, an emerging practice which embraces the economic provision for children's welfare and the close care and nurturing of children, others see no major changes in conventional practices. That is, the latter see mothering, as an exclusive activity of close care for children in the home, which is non-compatible and conflicts with paid employment (Campaña, 1992 cited in Zapata Martelo, 1996:124).¹

Those who fall into the incompatibility with employment model include adherents of the rational choice schemes (Becker, 1985; Polachek, 1981). This line of thought suggests that the task of mothering, an activity that entails full-time homebound close care and nurturing of children by the biological mother impedes women's access to paid employment despite the great financial constraints mothers might face. This category of mothering, Moen (1992:42) has termed the 'conflicted' mothers' practice² and covers the cases of mothers who leave the workforce to care for their young children despite great economic need.

Among those who fall into the compatibility with employment type are scholars who regard paid employment and mothering as compatible. Within this branch two categories of mothering are clearly defined: the first one refers to mothers who are 'copers' (Moen, 1992:44) or who successfully manage to work in jobs whose schedules are flexible enough to allow them to earn an income while giving far greater priority to their roles as mothers. In order to maximise a woman's capacity to nurture and closely care for her children, especially under great financial difficulties, copers opt for economic activities with flexible schedules and wages which allow them to give the task of mothering most attention and concern. Recent empirical evidence has demonstrated the popularity of this form of mothering among low-income urban mothers, both in the developing and industrialised world. For instance, Fernández Poncela's (1996:53) Nicaragua-based study revealed that mothers in her sample preferred the informal sector's "flexibility of schedule and location, which allowed them to overcome the obstacles to formal work imposed by their domestic role... and [could] care for their children and maintain their key roles in the family." Similarly, Schein (1995:44) found that "for many of the women, making motherhood a priority [was] reflected by their attempts to develop working arrangements that allow[ed] them time with their children" (see also Fernández-Kelly and García, 1990; Romero, 1988:83).

The second category within the compatibility model includes the 'committed to employment' category which emphasizes the non-conflicting relation between paid employment and practices of mothering (Segura, 1994). This interconnection, termed 'gendered moral rationalities' by Duncan and Edwards (1996) or 'transnational motherhood' by Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) sees "financial provision through employment as one aspect of mothers' moral responsibility towards their children"

(Duncan and Edwards, 1996:201). Under this type of mothering, paid work provides the financial resources necessary for the well-being of children. That is, the mothers' income-earning activities constitute a complement and not an obstacle to their mothering (Hays, 1996:146). This was revealed in Denise Segura's (1994) sample of Mexican immigrants in the States who saw economic provision for their children as an intrinsic part of their mothering. When referring to her respondents she maintained that they did not dichotomize social life into public and private spheres, but appeared to view employment as "one workable domain of mothering" (Segura, 1994:212). A crucial aspect of this type of mothering concerns child care while the mother is not in the home. In particular, the neighbourhood and support systems such as kin, acquaintances and friends become central for these mothers, especially if child care is not available at the work place (Lamphere et al., 1993). Indeed, Duncan and Edwards (1996) reported the centrality of the setting in which the committed working mothers lived, in forming social ties and relationships which, in turn, gave them access to child care in instances where it was not readily available otherwise. The pivotal role of child care as it relates to the committed mothers' type of mothering is best explained by Lamphere et al. (1994:221): "finding quality day care mediates the contradiction between women's paid and domestic labour by providing women with a sense that their obligations to their children are being fulfilled in a satisfactory way". It breaks the argument that a mother's decision to work in the formal sector of the economy conflicts with her child's need for a permanent close bond with the mother and instead incorporates breadwinning (Keller, 1994:153,155).

A point to highlight with regard to the above mentioned practices of mothering however is that, whether or not mothers consider paid employment as part of their successful mothering, working mothers, under this model, be they conflicting, copers or committed mothers, struggle to maintain the logic of intensive mothering and the pivotal role it plays in their lives. Moreover, emerging practices of mothering may oppose social expectations about women at large, namely the state or even religious institutions' desired practices of mothering. The state, through practices and policies may come to define and impose dominant models of mothering (Boris, 1994). Indeed, in order to ensure that women accept the responsibility for full-time, homebound mothering, research has demonstrated that mothers are exposed to a steady stream

of ideological messages that position full-time homebound care of children (most likely mothering of the conflicting or copers type) as the dominant form of mothering (Charlton, et al., 1989). This process, reinforced by the educational, religious, and governmental systems, and other dominant institutions, assigns women to the domestic sphere, Afshar (1987) holds, and deems women solely suitable for full-time homebound reproductive tasks. Studies in the developing world have revealed cases where the state, through family agencies and institutions, makes use of social forms of control to reinforce the patriarchal ideology that establishes homebound mothering as the primary function of women (see, for example, Dennis, 1987 on Nigeria; and Jacobs and Howard, 1987 on Zimbabwe). Having said that, in the face of conflicting messages, Kaplan (1992:8) maintains that, women develop innovative ways to resist pressure and, over time, manage to assert their own choices. A close look at the case of Mexico will reveal similarities with the above mentioned debates.

Motherhood in Low-Income Mexico

Studies on low-income Mexico have reiterated that just as in many other cultures worldwide, social expectations deem homebound motherhood to be women's primary destiny (Myers, 1993:70-1). Cultural prescriptions for the ideal woman as obedient and virginal, Romanucci Ross (1973) maintained, encoded an ideal of motherhood where the mother in her home appeared to be the functional core of the Mexican family. Levine and Sunderland Correa's (1993:97) research findings from urban Mexico found that as survivors of decades of mistreatment by parents, male kin and/or husbands, low-income women in their sample gained strength from their sacrificing roles as mothers. A woman's selfless commitment to childbearing and child rearing, they argue, is expected to express itself through full-time domesticity which, in turn, ensures proper nurturance, maintenance, and guidance for her children (Harkess, 1973:251; Vaughan, 1979:67). Thus, in cases where a woman is forced to work outside the home, due to economic need, she is expected to do so only until she begins raising offspring and, if the insufficiency of her partner's wages forces her to generate income after childbirth, she should earn an income in economic activities that guarantee her constant access to her children (see García Colome, 1990:190-1; Tiano, 1994:49). The Mexican state has helped perpetuate this ideology through the mass media and the educational

system (Towner, 1979:51; Vaughan, 1979:74). All in all, recent research on child rearing in urban Mexico (Levine and Sunderland Correa, 1993) indicates that conventional views on 'good' mothering that conflict with paid employment in the formal sector continue to shape most low-income Mexican women's practices.

Whilst findings on the meanings of motherhood appeared to be faithful to a social ideal, practices of mothering among women appeared somewhat more diverse regionally. Consideration of maquila mothers in the northern Mexican border region reveals alternative practices. While earlier studies described women maquila workers as planning to leave the work force upon marriage and childbearing (Fernández-Kelly, 1983a:140), recent research indicates that most expect to continue working after their children are born. For instance, Iglesias (1985:140) found that mature maquiladora workers in Tijuana, Mexico, although viewing their jobs as secondary to their central roles as mothers, justified their work as helping them to be better mothers.³ Similarly, Tiano's Mexicali-based study found that the growing importance of working mothers' wages for their children's economic welfare led them to view their wage-earning as a key aspect of their maternal responsibilities (1994:115). For the very young maquila wives and mothers in the northern Mexican border region, the situation appears more complex. Iglesias (1985:75) mentions cases of young newly-married maquila wives and mothers who had to ask their husbands for permission to work. While those whose partners objected to their employment had to remain into their households to become housewives and full-time homebound mothers despite great financial need, many others fulfilled their role as mothers both as economic providers working in maquilas for their children and as carers in the household (Iglesias, 1985:37). Male partners in the household may severely limit mother's choices of employment. As stated by Tiano (1994:139): "Partnered women... in some cases [found it] essential to marital harmony.. to leave the labour force for a time to devote themselves to child rearing". Interestingly, such a restriction was not reported for those partnered maquila mothers who, upon marriage and childbirth, engaged in the flexible schedules of the informal sector (*Ibid.*, 121). As Fernández-Kelly (1983a:176) explains: "While husbands often object to their wives' employment outside the home (even when they are forced into acceptance by need), they seldom disapprove of activities which do not threaten common notions of femininity and women's place in society".

Emerging practices of mothering which entail economic provision as well as close emotional care for children have, however, confronted outright opposition. In Juárez, the Catholic church and the State have both voiced their concern over women's distance from their 'real' roles as wives and full-time mothers within their households. Muro (1992:157) maintains that the Catholic Church in Juárez has been promulgating its strong views on women's participation in paid employment in maquilas and has focused its attention on ideologies of 'conventional family' reflected in pastoral work that prompts maquila mothers to return to their households on a permanent basis. In his words: "the Catholic Church has seen in women's access to paid employment in maquilas a great danger as according to church leaders, the family unit is increasingly showing symptoms of fragility." Loose moral and sexual behaviour among mothers, and juvenile delinquency among children, he adds, are among the many evils church leaders see as characteristic of contemporary maquila workers' families. The state, on the other hand, has not remained silent as political candidates have been said to keep close alliance with the Catholic church. Muro (1992) documents that it was precisely when Francisco Barrio, an active member of the local Catholic Church, a former mayor of Juárez, was elected state governor in 1992 that he promulgated the importance of men's incorporation into maquilas in the city.

Emerging meanings of motherhood and the conflicting range of messages women maquila and non-maquila workers face in Juárez, will be expounded when looking at the practices of mothering for women in the sample.

Respondents in the Sample

Older women in the sample appeared to have initially subscribed to the conventional Mexican ideal of motherhood and practices of full-time homebound mothering. All of them had raised children to whom, they reported, they had devoted their lives. Moreover, a life-time of mothering appeared to be a source of strength, as respondents took pride in their children and in offspring who were "decent", honest, and hardworking members of society (12 out of 16 had raised between 5 and 13 children).⁴

Successful mothering in the desert, Benita stated, was the result of her close care which included avoidance of full-time employment outside the home. Although some admitted to generating income while their children were young, they reported that

they always did so in ways that let them remain in the home, or at least involved flexible schedules that allowed maximum time for mothering. Limiting their income-earning activities to home-based tasks, in their view, provided the household with some income without jeopardizing the fulfilment of their maternal duties. Indeed, while they recognized the economic and personal advantages that paid employment brought to local women, they nevertheless believed that these benefits did not outweigh the costs. They alleged that working mothers' children bore the brunt of not having a full-time mother in the home. In other words, their practice of mothering, which entailed full-time nurturance until children willingly left the household, was incompatible with waged employment. Following Marginalisation Thesis adherents, older women's practices of mothering revealed their marginal status as their full-time home-bound mothering reflected their economic dependence on male partners and their confinement to the domestic sphere.⁵

Mothers as Full-time Housewives and as Workers in the Informal Sector

Mothers who worked in the informal sector and full-time housewives expressed great relief at being able to remain in the household for their children. Whilst most maintained that economic difficulties were particularly acute, they preferred to closely supervise their children who, according to them, were the target of much 'negative' influence locally. Mature mothers in the informal sector, in particular, expressed great worry over teenagers as, apparently, conditions in Juárez were much more difficult for mothers in the Nineties than a decade or two previously. The main reasons, they reported, included not only the fact that daughters could become 'rebellious' or 'loose' with all the entertainments offered in maquilas (or in El Paso if young teenagers crossed the border to take up employment as domestic workers) but also that daughters, mature mothers reported, could be easily taken in by cholos, male gangsters, drug traffickers or drug addicted juveniles hanging around the settlements and in maquilas. Mature respondent Marina, experienced great worry over her maternal duties to her adolescent daughter, Tere. Marina had dropped out of maquilas and begun to iron clothes in her home as her daughter, Tere, also a maquila worker, appeared to be philandering with cholos. Marina's mothering had therefore become one of close supervision and care for her own biological children inside her own household or, put in Moen (1992) terms, her

practice of mothering had moved from a committed to a coper type. Interestingly, some women in the informal sector had even considered dropping out of the informal sector once economic difficulties were overcome to become full-time carers of their offspring. Indeed, as a street seller, Monica felt she would very much like to abandon her work in the informal sector so as to prevent her children from engaging with the 'wrong' kind of people.

To conclude, mature full-time housewives and workers in the informal sector, shared a concern for mothering their children which involved the practice of close nurturing and care for their offspring. Marginalisation Thesis adherents, would again explain the case of mothers whose economic activities remained largely marginal to their main status as mothers in their households. These women's economic dependence on their male partners' wages and their responsibilities as full-time homebound mothers largely kept them at bay from the opportunity to earn higher incomes as full-time wage earners.

Maquila Mothers

Mature and younger maquila women also perceived motherhood as a very important part of their lives, and many expressed a willingness to make whatever personal sacrifices were required to care for their children. Yet, for the women in both generations, mothering had a different meaning than it did for senior women or for women in the informal sector. For these women, mothering encompassed more than nurturing. It involved the perceived duty to support their children economically. Whilst it was not surprising to find that for those maquila women with no partners, their own economic contributions to the household were as important as giving children care and attention at home, it was surprising to find most partnered workers so emphatic on the compatibility of their mothering and their job in maquilas. Indeed, most mature and younger maquila mothers, partnered and non-partnered, reported that economic difficulties obliged them to reconcile paid employment with the care and nurturing of their children. The issue came out during mature and younger maquila workers' life and work histories which revealed that paid employment had been a central feature of their lives. Whilst their primary commitment to mothering had led many to periodic exits and re-entrances into the work force, reflecting life cycle stages, child care availability and

corresponding needs of their children, most felt that mothering encompassed not only caring but also earning for their offspring.

Mature maquila respondents with long work histories especially those with more than one child, reported that, newborn children meant continuous exits from the work force in order to nurture them when they were very young. The duration of their retreats within the household ranged from the relatively short period allocated for maternity leave to longer periods of time (from three to six years). Although many mature maquila women regretted having to return to full-time employment before they considered their children were ready for the physical separation, they also believed their economic circumstances gave them little choice. For instance, Gisela, a mature woman, described her distress at having to return to work after her daughter was born: "I wanted to stay home with Jessica, when she was a baby, a while longer", but financial difficulties in the household had forced her to go back to work. As she stated: "without child care or my mother to help me out I went back to work straight away.....I don't think I would have dropped out (of the work force) for good, but I would have liked to stay with her until she was a bit more grown up". That is, these maquila women returned to their jobs based on their definition of mothering which encompassed economic provision for children's basic needs as well as close nurture and care. This was clearly put by Martina, a mature maquila mother, "At the beginning when my children were little my heart used to break as I would take them early in the morning to my neighbour to look after them while I worked.... I needed the money for them... I've always wanted the best for them. Now that they are attending school I want them to go to university. I couldn't think of it without a job."

As such, the situation of maquila women's experiences of mothering fit in with the analysis provided by Integration Thesis followers who state that the incorporation of women into modern forms of industrial employment prompts women's access to areas in the public sphere. That is, it integrates them into public life. The complementary nature of paid employment and close care for children reported by maquila women, would be regarded by proponents of the Integration Thesis as revealing of the associated benefits women derive from their access to maquila employment. Their close control over breadwinning activities, Integration Thesis followers would suggest, provides mothers with greater access to resources for them and their children, and at

large, may give them higher control over their own lives. This is further corroborated by the reported experiences of mature women with grown up children. Indeed, although women in both generations reported work histories involving periodic insertions into the maquila labour force combined with periods in the household, life course factors shaped their circumstances rather markedly. Whilst those whose children had departed from the household could return to maquilas on a more permanent basis, those with dependent children had to intermittently step in and out of the maquila labour market. Relieved that her daughter had married, Helena separated from her husband and returned to maquila work. She reported: "These days economic difficulties are so strong. A woman has to work 'til she dies....I don't mind working for maquilas. I have my friends, I can even go to dance-halls." In fact, this is further confirmed by the fact that whilst less than a quarter of mature maquila women were in the home at the time of the study, almost half of the younger women were full-time house persons. Whilst mature maquila women were old enough to have seen their children enter adolescence or adulthood, the great majority of the younger maquila mothers were raising young children. Consequently, the sacrifices women felt they had to make appeared most sharpened when their children were very young. Interestingly, mothers' dance-hall visits appeared to be a revealing factor. Maquila mothers with young children reported having to stop visiting dance-halls because they felt they had to stay with their children in the household. As Lupita, a mature maquila woman, put it, "When my baby was born I had to behave myself and stop going to dance-halls. My child became the most important thing for me." For those mature and younger women with partners, visits to dance-halls were not always possible either as confrontations over good mothering may have prevented some mothers from doing so. This point was illuminated during the inter-generational discussions as two mature maquila workers (Pati and Silvia) (sisters) reported cases of colleagues either married/cohabiting mothers who attended dance-halls on Fridays. Given that many dance-halls on Fridays allowed free entrance to women maquila workers, Pati and Silvia reported that some married maquila mothers visited dance-halls with co-workers after the completion of their work shift. These two workers mentioned that the local norm is that when partnered maquila mothers go out on Fridays, their husbands/partners have to remain in the home with the children and instead go out drinking on Saturdays when the mother is in the home. Although this

arrangement was reported to take place in many households, cases of children remaining with maquila mothers on Fridays after husbands got their wives out of dance-halls by force were also reported. This was confirmed by María Guadalupe, a mature worker, and Dolores, a younger worker. María Guadalupe stated that her partner checked her punctuality arriving home from the maquilas on Fridays under the pretence both that she should not go out alone as it was very dangerous and also because the children needed her. Whilst she was aware of the dangers around settlements she cynically commented that her husband only worried about danger in the settlements and the children's well-being on Fridays, the day when dance-halls provided free entrance to women and when he preferred going out drinking. Younger maquila worker, Dolores, also mentioned that it was common to see women workers on the line with bruises, in particular on the Saturday morning shift. This, she continued, was usually the result of married maquila mothers' 'poor' behaviour on Fridays, by which she meant their visits to dance-halls. Days later, Dolores' own mother mentioned that her daughter's former husband used to get Dolores out of dance-halls by force. At the time of the interview, Dolores had separated from her husband and lived with her child in her parental household. An interesting point though is that from the information gathered it appeared that younger maquila mothers' situation was different from that reported by maquila mothers of the Seventies. The difference may lie in the changing scene of employment opportunities for low-income males in the city over time (see Chapter Three this thesis). Indeed, male partners' employment opportunities across generations may have been linked to women's options and definitions of mothering. Given that mature women's husbands had come of age in the 1970s, when the lack of maquila opportunities for men combined with high levels of male unemployment to limit men's ability to act as sole family breadwinners, maquila women of the era had to return to their jobs when their children were still very young. By contrast, younger maquila mothers' husbands had reached adulthood at a time when maquilas were actively recruiting men. Thus, in the Nineties, men's access to more stable jobs in the formal sector and to social security services combined with younger mothers' felt need to remain in the household and male partners' demands for her to do so, may partly explain the large numbers of younger workers within the household.

Having said that, data from those younger maquila mothers whose partners held

formal sector jobs showed that they hoped that their partners' steady incomes and access to social security services would extend the time they could remain out of work. Nonetheless, few believed that they would be able to afford this for a long period of time. Indeed, all were aware of the deteriorating value of the peso and the difficulty of sustaining a family on a single maquila wage. As Dora Estela, a younger maquila mother who had temporarily left the work force to care for her child, put it: "With this crisis our money is not sufficient for us to live. I'll have to go back to the maquila very soon."

Indeed, men's definitions of good mothering also came into the picture. Two younger, partnered maquila mothers, Carlota and Leti, recalled marital difficulties over the ideal care of their children. Husbands, according to these maquila workers, tended to highlight the importance of close, homebound, full-time mothering whenever Carlota or Leti mentioned going back to work. Whilst Leti had dropped maquila work in order to comply with her partner's wishes, she worried over her children's lack of materials for school. Her partner, on the other hand, repeatedly asserted the importance of her indoor permanence, on the grounds of children's need to have close contact with their mother. Carlota faced a similar situation. Carlota's partner had prevented her from returning to the maquilas due to his jealousy. She reported that in his view, maquila workers were not only 'loose' wives and neglectful mothers, but rebellious when it came to obeying their husbands. Several incidents of domestic violence had obliged Carlota to resort to domestic service at times when her husband was not in the household and the children were at school.

Presumed gains from the struggle maquila mothers confront to develop their own definitions of motherhood have however been further counteracted by the force of local patriarchal forces at institutional level. Indeed, the tensions arising from emerging practices of mothering were further highlighted by private and government-sponsored "family organizations." In one of my visits to a primary school, where family representatives held a talk for mothers, it became evident that maquila mothers, in particular, were continuously bombarded with messages on 'appropriate' mothering. On this occasion, a DIF (Desarrollo Integral de la Familia or the Integral Family Development) representative openly blamed the city's burgeoning crime rates on maquila working mothers' "neglectful attitude" towards their children, clearly seen in the

opening remark to the session: "Juárez is being attacked by violence. We all know that. And it is your fault. Maquila mothers have turned a blind eye to their children, and the community is paying for it." The Catholic Church was not silent on the issue either as priests interviewed similarly stressed the importance of full-time close mothering. Typical of their views were the comments of one priest, who claimed that children in the settlement where he worked, "....were lost because their mothers were more worried about the meagre cents they could earn in a maquila than the job as mothers they should do in the home." By transmitting the message that maquila workers' wage-earning activities are harming their children, and ultimately the community, there appears to be a new attempt to challenge the emerging meanings of motherhood, and quite possibly of their practices of mothering, among maquila workers. This was clear during the life histories as some mature maquila women, mothers of adolescents, worried that they had not done as good a job of mothering as they could have, and speculated that misfortunes that had befallen their children might have been avoided had they been able to stay home with them. The deaths of young children, the early pregnancies of their daughters, and the delinquent behaviour of their young sons were among the occurrences for which they assumed responsibility. In their view, the long working days and inflexible schedules of maquila jobs had contributed to their perceived neglect of their children. Guadalupe, a mature worker, recalled working in the maquilas during the Seventies. Economic necessity had made her leave her children in the care of a neighbour. She recalled the day that she left her two-year-old child in the morning with a fever only to return home from the maquilas to find that he had died during the day. Guadalupe's anger shifted towards her line supervisor who knew of the incident during the day but did not let anyone tell her before completion of her work shift.⁶ Not surprisingly, mature and younger maquila (and non-maquila) workers face worrisome circumstances with their children. Indeed, most younger maquila workers interviewed agreed that the conditions surrounding raising children had not improved in the 1990s. Working mothers still struggle with rigid schedules, long hours, lack of child care and dangers in the settlements. Violence, drug addiction, drug trafficking and gun dealing, commonplace incidences in their neighbourhoods, made many mature and younger maquila and non-maquila mothers worry about their children's future.

To further compound the situation, older mothers, close adherents of home-

bound mothering (or mothering of conflicting type), put great pressure on working maquila mothers (their own daughters) to leave their jobs for the sake of the children. Older women were emphatic about the associated disadvantages of maquila work for the tasks of mothering, and like non-maquila women, blamed the cities' wave of urban violence on maquila mothers' neglectful attitude towards their children. Whilst mature and younger maquila mothers shared similar meanings of mothering, mature maquila women appeared more strongly positioned in their views than younger maquila mothers, where conflict and contradiction prevailed. This issue became better illuminated during the inter-generational discussions as senior women stressed the mistakes younger generations make when opting for a wage rather than for full-time mothering. Conversations where older women were confronted with their maquila daughters usually revolved around examples of neighbours or family members with 'lost' children whose mothers did not remain in the household. The mature maquila women, in these circumstances, tended to remain silent. One respondent, however pointed out that economic need prompted many women to leave their children with neighbours. Interestingly, at this level, conversations between senior mothers and their mature maquila daughters revolved around the mother's duty and not the lack of child care in the community.⁷ The mature mothers when faced with their younger maquila daughters revealed similar degrees of conflict with respect to what constitutes successful mothering. This was illuminated in the case of Lupita, a maquila woman and her maquila daughter, Lina María. Lupita mentioned her desire that her daughter would not have to struggle in maquilas and that her grandchild would have a full-time mother. However, she also regretted the poverty her daughter and grandchild lived in at the time of the interview. Lina Maria, on the other hand, wanted to go back to maquilas and earn some money for her child, hoping that Lupita could look after her child, while she (Lina María) was on the line, but felt could not do so without marital conflict in her own home.

To sum up, caught between pressing definitions of appropriate mothering, maquila mothers face increasing challenges when bringing up their offspring. Economic need, local violence and the views of their own mothers and local social and political institutions, appear to place them in a situation where there is very little they can do to please the contradictory demands and messages of a changing environment. Contemporary workers face great frustration if they fail to provide sufficiently for their

children. However, those who remain working also face the pressing demands of messages that put in doubt their competence as mothers. It appears that the stereotypical image of the maquila worker as a loose woman as women move along the life course has been replaced by one of a disobedient wife and finally of a neglectful mother. All in all, contemporary maquila mothers face a conspiracy of messages that work to the detriment of their own definitions of good mothering.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored maquila workers' practices of mothering the constraints and challenges that forged these practices and maquila mothers' responses to contradictory and often conflicting messages. It started by providing theoretical considerations which highlighted the multiplicity of experiences of mothering among women, and the varying practices which mothers devised in order to provide good mothering to their offspring. Within this framework, the case of working mothers was introduced and particularly research on maquila mothers' experiences was analysed in relation to their commitment to paid employment and the compatibility of employment in maquilas with their practices of mothering.

Data from Juárez revealed that stage in the life course and the domestic cycle of the households to which mothers belonged further intersected with women's paid employment to produce varying definitions and practices of mothering. Whilst some saw employment and mothering as incompatible, others did not. Indeed, whilst older women largely defined their mothering as a conflictive type, mature and younger women were more likely to be either copers or committed mothers. Following Marginalisation Thesis adherents, older women's practices of mothering revealed their marginal status as their full-time home-bound mothering reflected their economic dependence on male partners and their confinement to the domestic sphere. This was also the case for mature workers in the informal sector, whose economic activities remained largely marginal to their main status as mothers in their households. The situation of maquila women, on the other hand, fitted in with the analysis provided by Integration Thesis followers who state that the incorporation of women into modern forms of industrial employment prompts women's access to areas in the public sphere. That is, it Integrates them into public life. The complementary nature of paid employment and close care for children

reported by maquila women, would be regarded by proponents of the Integration Thesis as revealing of the associated benefits women derive from their access to maquila employment. Their close control over breadwinning activities, Integration Thesis followers would suggest, provides mothers with greater access to resources for them and their children, and at large, may give them higher control over their own lives.

Adherents of the Exploitation Thesis, on the other hand, would consider the situation of maquila workers in a very different light. They would highlight the struggle between capital and patriarchy to make better workers and better mothers with little or no room for individual maquila workers' self-development. They would stress the difficulties imposed on women to fulfil two separate activities and the stress associated with such an undertaking. Moreover, they would focus on the perceived pride senior women took in their mothering as compared to the ambivalence seen in maquila mothers' judgement of their own mothering. At this point, however, Integration Thesis proponents would emphasize the many external pressures women face as their role as workers struggles to undermine patriarchal forms of subordination which, in turn, attempt to make women solely suitable for full-time close permanent care of children. They would contend that patriarchal institutions, such as the state and the Catholic church, recognise the threat maquilas pose to patriarchal definitions of mothering, a practice which conflicts with paid employment.

The argument, however, splits as the experiences of mothering reported by maquila women in the Seventies appeared somewhat different from those of young mothers in the Nineties. The presence of males on the line in recent decades seems to have further counteracted emerging definitions of mothering and to have prompted a receding trend in favour of conventional forms of mothering among the maquila wives who resided with maquila husbands. It seems as though younger women are being pushed back into their households. This said, it is possible that besides the higher incidence of maquila husbands among the second generation of workers, younger mothers' stage in the life cycle (bringing up young offspring) plus their youth may have contributed to younger mothers' reported higher ambivalence to practising 'committed' forms of mothering. Younger women's short experience as wives and mothers may make them seem weakly positioned in their roles and practices as mothers, something not as visible among the mature mothers in the sample. In other words, it is likely that

the first generation of maquila mothers felt similar ambivalence to committed forms of mothering when raising young offspring back in the Seventies and over time positioned themselves strongly in their new role as providing mothers.

This point would re-instate the debate between Exploitation Thesis and Integration Thesis followers. Briefly put, whilst Integration Thesis proponents would see younger women's ambivalence over committed forms of mothering in a positive light, Exploitation Thesis would throw doubt on it. Most importantly, all three theses would agree on highlighting the domestic domain's strength in shaping senior, mature and younger women's lives.

All in all, a maquila mother's obligation to her children which has come to involve the "double duty" of bearing, nursing, feeding, and morally educating her children into adulthood, as well as working long hours to ensure children's economic well-being and financial support clearly highlights a new form of patriarchy, one with a capitalist tone. This capitalist form of patriarchy entails that maquila women, economically responsible for their offspring successful development, must endure long hours on the line whilst remaining main carers and providers of love and affection to their offspring.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Campaña (1992 cited in Zapata Martelo, 1996:124) suggests that "there is a competition between women's domestic-reproductive and their productive tasks". .
2. Whilst Moen's (1992) model does not reflect the categories in the precise way presented here, I have, nonetheless, used them to highlight the diversity of practices of mothering and its relationship to paid employment.
3. Safa's study of Caribbean women workers also concludes that wage-earning has come to be defined as an integral component of women's domestic roles (1995b:47).
4. Whilst older women recalled difficulties as first time settlers, they also reported having felt supported in their roles as mothers and housewives, once other full-time housewives in newly-formed urban neighbourhoods arrived. Their arrival in Juárez appear to have been a positive experience not only because they could closely supervise their children but because other women settlers helped them to keep a vigilant watch over toddlers if the biological mother was not around. This initial form of 'collective motherhood' was, possibly, prompted by their scarce resources, their situation as migrants and the precarious housing and living conditions. Indeed, as first time migrants, many did not have anybody to turn to but relied on other settlers to make the most of available food and money (for a discussion on social network use and child care in Oaxaca City, see Willis, 1993).
5. Data collected on older women's responses and views on good mothering as it relates to urban neighbourhood violence was left out of this thesis but will be put into an article form after completion of this thesis.
6. Whilst it is likely that the same could have happened to a workers in the service sector, lack of data oblige me to leave the question unanswered.
7. Another point, however, was that whilst older women took pride in their mothering they felt let down by their offspring, many of whom had departed from their households, either to the States or had got married, with little news or money from them since. Mature women, on the other hand, mentioned having little economic expectations about their children. Their views on children's duty to their mothers appeared to be centred around respect but not on monetary contributions. More research on the area of remittances and maquila mothers' economic expectations of their children is greatly needed.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

This thesis aimed at exploring the impact of maquila employment on the lives of low-income women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, a receptor city of assembly industries located on the border with the United States. It endeavoured to answer the question of whether the incorporation of Juarese women into maquilas altered local forms of patriarchal domination at the household level.

At a theoretical level, in accordance with Walby's structuralist approach, this thesis argues that a new form of patriarchy, a capitalist form, overtook prevailing forms of patriarchal subordination at the household level in the lives of low-income Juarese maquila women in the sample. The data collected suggests, that an increase in female labour force participation in maquilas brought into sharp focus the interconnections between the private sphere of the household, conventionally regarded as the main site of women's subordination, and public spheres namely maquilas. ~~In other words,~~ Capitalist forms of industrial production penetrated the gender dynamics at the household level giving way to emerging forms of patriarchal control and domination. Such changes, however, were not uniform. Women's individual characteristics, their stage in the life course and the domestic cycle of the households to which they belonged combined to produce varying shifts across some of the six interdependent structures (the patriarchal mode of production, male violence, patriarchal relations in paid work, the state, sexuality and cultural institutions). Thus, the way in which each site interlocked with maquila employment, the main focus of the research, gave way to varying degrees of capitalist patriarchy moulding specific areas or stages in the life of a factory worker and her household. This was clearly seen in the reported experiences of young maquila workers' new spaces for courtship, the gender dynamics arising from wives' intermittent employment in maquilas and maquila mothers' expanding concepts of motherhood which encompassed breadwinning as well as caring for and nurturing their children, something not registered among non-maquila workers in the sample. Within the context of an emerging Juarese capitalist patriarchy, local women's active responses and shifting views demonstrated their active 'investment', as put in Moore's terms, on their self-chosen roles. More importantly data on maquila workers from Juárez revealed a continuous negotiation of gender roles and relations at the household level

as a result of women's incorporation into modern forms of industrial employment. When examining the data, three theses, the Marginalisation, the Exploitation and the Integration theses were interrogated and their positions enlightened the situation of women maquila workers along the life course. Through them it was possible to observe the specific effects of maquila employment on maquila workers' selected stages in their life course. They allowed a close assessment not of whether or not their employment was beneficial to the women concerned but of the controversy that emerges around women's access to maquila employment. Specificity and context allowed analysis of the in-depth gender dynamics behind women's incorporation into maquila employment and the impact it had on their lives.

At an empirical level, the thesis posed particular questions concerning the types of impact that factory employment could have on the lives of low-income women workers. More specifically, it aimed at exploring the effects of maquila employment at selected stages in workers' life course, acknowledging the differing circumstances under which women lived. Having said that, similarities across the first and the second generation of maquila workers in the sample emerged from their employment patterns which were both shaped by, and helped to shape the gender processes taking place at the household level. Thus, with the use of a complex methodology which attempted to incorporate various interlinked levels of analysis with specific focus on maquila workers (i.e. a comparative study looking into the case maquila workers with respect to non-maquila workers, a comparative study with focus on maquila workers' industrial generations and a study concentrated on the life course perspective), this thesis explored the lives of 82 individual women maquila and non-maquila workers and their households selected from 25 different low-income settlements spread along the identified poor areas of the city. Being a Colombian woman doing research in Juárez, illuminated the complexity of insider-outsider approaches and the importance of revealing personal research experiences while on the field from start to end. Undoubtedly, my fieldwork in Juárez was a process that moved from disengaged to engaged, from personal discomfort with respondents and locals to greater interest in the culture and fascination with the diversity of perceptions Latin Americans hold among themselves.

The main research findings showed that women's access to maquilas contributed to a shift from private sites as the main form of patriarchal control over women's lives to public sites, namely maquilas, which in turn gave way to a capitalist machismo. The associated freedom to engage in maquila employment outside the household, in some instances, altered existing gender arrangements operating at the household level and prompted the emergence of new gendered meanings to female maquila workers' practices as adolescents, wives and mothers. Whilst giving women access to an independent and socially acceptable means of earning an income and mostly of escaping from the domestic isolation, maquilas rendered them subordinate to the control exerted by capital and to new forms of patriarchy. Consequently, this thesis highlighted the fact that low-income Juarenses' access to factory jobs can no longer be looked at in terms of whether women maquila workers, on the whole, are winners or losers in the export-led growth development strategies. The reason, simply put, is because patriarchy appeared altered in degree but not in content. More importantly, it was stated that the implications of such alterations are difficult to measure because women factory workers, do not form a homogeneous group. That is, whilst each generation of respondents had similar experiences, they showed diverse responses to the effects of maquila employment on gender roles and relations at the household level. Their individual characteristics, their specific economic circumstances and the time at which they joined the maquilas (first generation of the Seventies or second generation of the Eighties and Nineties), their stage in the life course, the domestic cycle of the households to which they belonged, largely determined the impact of maquilas on their lives and their views on the specific outcomes.

In the specific area of partner selection, the findings of my research revealed that women's access to maquila jobs expanded their opportunities to meet male partners in dance-halls, away from the gaze of parents or chaperones as in previous decades, thereby increasing chances for non-parentally supervised forms of partner selection. Whilst the chapter on partner selection presented empirical data and results in accordance with Integration Thesis followers, findings were also judged in relation to capitalist gains. In other words, whilst the increased freedom to meet partners away from previously reported parentally-supervised context are considered positive for the young women concerned, in as much as it allows women factory workers to enhance

their opportunities for greater control over their own lives, it was also acknowledged that such a phenomenon also gives the maquila industry greater control over its workforce and their leisure time. Whilst accepting Integration Thesis proponents' views on the gains in the specific area of partner selection that maquila women derive from meeting partners without parental supervision, such assessment deserves careful scrutiny as a defeat of patriarchy may mean a gain in favour of capital. Changing the locus of control over the workers' life may not necessarily give women a great deal of control over their own choices. Indeed, as data demonstrated, such alteration prompted a reaction in patriarchy, thereby seeking to control workers' lives in new emerging ways. This was clear in the specific negative outcomes associated with the new forms of partner selection. The maquila women who opted for alternative forms of partner selection (namely dance-halls) endured the stigma of being regarded locally as 'loose women', something non-maquila women in the sample did not. Whilst Marginalisation thesis proponents were right to observe that older women did not gain the opportunity to meet partners without parental chaperonage, Marginalisation thesis proponents failed to observe that, senior women in the sample, whilst not deriving the benefits of meeting partners in dance-halls, did not have to pay the associated toll for such a gain either. Whilst it appeared that the area of partner selection demonstrated a relative resilience of the forces of local patriarchy, exploration into maquila workers' responses and their views, highlighted the strength of conventional mate selection forms and the ideological lag in assimilating and accepting new forms. The shifting position of individual women, which showed their desire, as Moore would suggest, to 'invest in' conventional forms of appropriate mate choice despite their past engagement in self-selected maquila-related forms, revealed that respondents, even in the face of unfavourable circumstances, would select from available choices to suit the purposes they feel best favour them and the members of their households.

A shift from private patriarchal control over women to public sites, i.e. maquilas, was also visible in the area of household labour. Close exploration of maquila wives' experiences of household labour revealed that whilst women in the sample (maquila and non-maquila workers) retained responsibility for the completion of household tasks, data demonstrated not only that their experiences were largely shaped by respondents' stage in the life course and the domestic cycle of the households to which they

belonged but also that the fixed, long schedules of maquila employment constrained workers' completion of domestic work.

Moreover, in the specific case of nuclear households, once respondents became maquila wives or partners, a new form of machismo came into place within the households, in particular, in times of great financial difficulties. Whilst husbands, on the whole, tended to control wives' efficient completion of household chores when she remained in the home, when working for maquilas, maquila wives saw in their economic provision into the household a temporary relief in household labour stemming from their husbands' reduced demands to complete the chores. In fact, in nuclear households where both partners worked for maquilas, respondents reported that their partners occasionally helped with selected activities such as child care and food shopping. Slightly higher rates of participation in domestic activities reported among maquila husbands, something not reported among non-maquila workers, whilst interpreted by Integration Thesis followers as a step forward in the battle against patriarchal forms of domination at the household level, was not regarded with optimism in this thesis. Along with Exploitation Thesis followers, it was argued that such variations demand close consideration of the types of activities males perform while the maquila wife is on the line. It was also highlighted not only the control husbands exert over wives in the household and the fact that, in most instances maquila husbands arrived from the line to rest, something maquila wives did not but also that less patriarchal control over wives' labour in the home meant greater control of capital over workers' labour on the line. Wives' reported need to contribute to their households stressed an increase commitment from workers to fulfil the production quotas that gave them access to extra-payments and reduced time into their households.

The last selected area for analysis, motherhood and practices of mothering for maquila workers in the sample, shows once more how motherhood, an area where patriarchy has deemed women most suitable carers for their offspring, became altered as a result of women's incorporation into maquilas. This was most clear with the first generation of maquila workers where their meanings of motherhood emerged not only as a result of their access to maquilas employment but also due to local low-income men's lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector. The incorporation of breadwinning activities in maquila workers' definition of good mothering reflects how

capital shaped local forms of patriarchy, and how the private and public spheres came to be closely interlocked. Whilst it may be true, as Integration Thesis followers argue, that women's new definitions and practices of mothering allowed them to gain some control over their lives and gave them opportunities to directly improve their children's well-being, it was also argued that it increased women's responsibilities for their children's future and higher commitment to work. Women maquila mothers have taken on board a greater share of obligation, as mothers and providers. Notwithstanding, whilst capital and patriarchy managed to suit their purposes to generate new obligations in the lives of women as mothers and as workers, inter-generational data revealed that not all respondents had positively envisioned themselves as successful mothers. Their ambivalence, supported by the State, church and cultural institutions demonstrated the strength of prevailing local patriarchal forces which attempted to push women back into their households.

All in all, maquila respondents adjusted to the circumstances to best fulfil the ideals they had envisaged for themselves and their households. In the face of a continuous shift of their meanings of womanhood, previously regarded as belonging to the private sphere of the home, to public spheres such as maquilas, the two generations of maquila workers as adolescent daughters, wives and mothers in the sample continuously attempted to reap the few associated benefits of their employment in maquilas which included access to social security and a fixed wage. This said, it appeared that neither capital nor patriarchy were willing to give in easily to women's individual goals and aspirations. It may be that a third generation of maquila workers will be able not only to reap the few associated benefits associated with their incorporation into maquila jobs but also to strongly stand against capitalist patriarchal domination.

Methodological Limitations

Whilst this thesis attempted to study the case of women maquila workers along their life course, through a double comparative study (industrial generations of maquila workers and women undertaking other economic activities), the study did not divide women maquila workers according to industrial sectors (eg. apparel or electronics, or according to those who work for US-owned maquilas in contradistinction to those who

worked for locally-owned maquilas or any other type of foreign-owned maquilas operating locally). Whilst aware of the impact that the specific branches of maquila employment have on the lives of women and of the differing organisational practices associated with American or Mexican-owned maquilas (see Tiano, 1994), a fourth level of comparison would have complicated matters further. Moreover, the study did not include middle-income or high-income residential areas in Juárez. Whilst studies of this kind are badly needed, such comparisons certainly went beyond the scope of the research. Foremost, the greatest limitation of the study was the limited space devoted to non-maquila workers in the sample. Data collected may have allowed for greater scrutiny but limitations of time and space did not make this possible. Similarly, data collected on the innumerable cases of maquila workers who attended dance-halls as mature women or the experiences of household labour reported by young adolescents of the Seventies or Eighties were not included here but will be included in publications. Finally, the study was conducted in the low-income settlements spread in the northern, central and southern low-income parts of the city, as opposed to carrying it out on the factory premises. Whilst recognising the illuminating insights scholars in the field have gained from conducting studies in the factories (for example Fernández-Kelly, 1983a; Iglesias, 1985) it is also argued here that a study conducted in the settlements proved a valuable tool to gain an insight into women maquila workers' lives, the households to which they belonged and their communities in which their lives were lived. The strategy of approaching women in their households whilst proving useful to the observation of women in their own contexts, also allowed me to contact non-maquila women living in the low-income neighbourhoods in Juárez.

Suggestions for Further Research

Theoretically, as this thesis has demonstrated, the convergence and conflicting nature of the forces of capital and patriarchy as they further intersect with age along women's life course, deserves greater exploration. This is due not only to the fact that the structural forces of capital and patriarchy have, at times, proved to be highly flexible but also, because of their rigidity. Such consideration, however, requires more detailed studies that closely observe the dynamics of global capitalism and patriarchy as they further intersect with other variables, such as age, altering Third World women's lives

and the dynamics of the households to which they belong.

At an empirical level, the area of female factory employment worldwide requires cross-cultural studies of a comparative nature which explore the exact context in which women factory workers are said to be marginalised, exploited by or integrated in capitalist forms of employment. Moreover, studies of this kind should incorporate women's views not only in their own dynamics of gender roles and relations at the household level and in factory premises, but their views about men, be they husbands, brothers, sons, colleagues at work, including line supervisors, and the way they all form part of broader patriarchal and capitalist structures that affect women's lives and their households.

Concerning studies on women maquila workers in northern Mexico, at a theoretical level, scholarship requires the use of structuralist approaches combined with theoretical developments that allow room for maquila workers' individual responses. In ignoring the controversial responses of women factory workers to macro processes, a whole area of gender studies is being ignored. Along this line, further research should question the conditions under which maquila women's responses are produced and the nature of such responses.

At an empirical level in the northern Mexican region, despite a growing amount of literature on the subject of women and maquilas, opportunities for new scholarly works are beginning to emerge in the area of maquila mothers with respect to maquila daughters. Inter-generational variations should encompass the varying degrees of change at the household level in terms of gender roles and relations and the mother-daughter dynamics arising from two generations of maquila employment locally. Moreover, the incorporation of males in maquila jobs in the apparel and electronics sectors provides a fruitful venue for studies on the marital dynamics among the new generation of maquila workers in Mexico, and emerging meanings of fatherhood.

ANNEXES

This section will present complementary information not included in the body of the thesis. In first instance it will include the definitions used for most household types, next it will include a list of main organisations and individuals visited and interviewed, some information of the settlements put in charts, and additional figures taken from newspaper archives in Juárez. Finally, a concise version of the questionnaire administered in the settlements and 6 samples of respondents' life histories are also included.

Definitions

Nuclear Households: "Married or cohabiting couple and their immediate offspring" (Chant, 1991:234).

Extended Households or Male-Extended Households: "Nuclear family that resides with relatives other than their own children" (Chant, 1991:234). Most extended households in the sample contained a married or cohabiting couple, grown children and usually one of the adult children's partner. Household members ate together on a regular basis and pooled household finances.

Female-Headed Households: "Consisting of a mother and her children" (Chant, 1991:234) and can be found in two types:

a-De jure: women with no resident husband or partner

b-De facto: women with husband but temporarily absent (see Youssef and Hetler, 1983).

Female-Extended Households: "woman -headed unit with additional relatives (Chant, 1991:234).

Organizations and Individuals Consulted and Interviewed

1) Local Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) visited:

-FEMAP (Federación Mexicana de Asociaciones Privadas de Salud y Desarrollo Comunitario)

Program on HIV prevention for sex and maquila workers directed by Maestra Graciela de la Rosa.

-COMPAÑEROS, a local NGO that deals with young male drug addicts, interview with

Ma Helena Ramos.

-COMO (Centro de Orientación de la Mujer Obrera), which at the time of the fieldwork was tackling the provision of child care for women workers, interview with Luz María Villalba.

-DIF (Desarrollo Integral de la Familia) interview with Chela

-COMISION PRO-JUSTICIA EN LAS MAQUILADORAS, interview with Cipriana Jurado.

-FEDERACION DE MUJERES POR LA PAZ, tackling issues related to domestic violence, interview held with Ms Dolores Leoni.

A point to note here is that local low-income as well as upper income women's participation in local NGOs was evident (for a discussion, see Young, 1990).

2) Visits to other local organisations which work at community level in low-income neighbourhoods in Juárez were also part of this fieldwork. They included:

-OPI (Organización Popular Independiente) which deals with the rehabilitation of violent youngsters or cholos in the northern part of Juárez. Interviews with Maria Luisa Castor (Colonia Altavista)

-CDP (Comité de Defensa Popular) that works on aiding the legalisation of property for settlers located in the so-called 'CDP' settlements (mostly self-built houses).

3) Local meetings held by the above-mentioned organisations plus other meetings attended by local low-income women, political meetings and public demonstrations were attended and those included:

-FEMAP	Meeting attended on	Sex workers and HIV
-CDP		Legalisation of property in Juárez
-DIF		Parental education
-COMO		Child care and women workers
-RELIGIOUS MEETINGS in <u>Colonia Anapra</u>		
-COMISION PRO-JUSTICIA EN LAS MAQUILADORAS		Migration to the US
-OPI		Local violence

4) Local Low-Income leaders interviewed:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| (1)Cipriana Jurado | Comisión Pro-justicia de las Maquiladoras |
| (2)Lupita Rosas | Ex-leader representative to CDP settlements |
| (3)Luisa de Castor | Leader OPI organisation |
| (4)Guadalupe Perales | Participant COMO |

5) Interviews with local priests included:

'Colonia Altavista', settlement in Old Juárez, interview with Oscar Enriquez.

6) Public demonstrations attended:

15th March 1996 International's Women's day

Demonstration against Violence Against Women in Juárez

7) Brothels in Central Juárez:

- El Gallito
- El Norteño

8) Main dance-halls visited included:

- El Patio, included an interview with local administrator.
- Noa Noa
- Salón Mexico (Branch in Central Juárez) interview with administrator.
- Sinaloense.

9) In order to get some historical background for the settlements visited, interviews with first women settlers were held in each settlement's age group above-mentioned.

Thus, for

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| -Region 1 | (13) Interviewees |
| -Region 2 | (5) Interviewees |
| -Region 3 | (6) Interviewees |

Main local housing and planning bodies visited included:

- Catastro, Planning Officials, Architect Arnaldo Arreola

-Ayuntamiento Juárez, municipality officials on housing and planing interview with the engenieer Maria Idali Mendoza Ruelas.

-ICSA, Department of Regional Development, architect Chávez and Ms. Guadalupe Santiago.

Secretaría de Comercio (Commerce Secretariat) Archives.

10) Statistics were taken from INEGI, (Instituto Nacional de Estadistica y Geografia) branch in Juárez.

11) Available published and unpublished material was collected from local universities visited as follows:

In Ciudad Juárez, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, and COLEF (Colegio de la Frontera Norte).

In Tijuana, COLEF (El Colegio de la Frontera Norte).

In San Diego, UCSD (University of California in San Diego).

In Mexico City, COLMEX (El Colegio de Mexico)

In El Paso, UTEP (University of Texas at El Paso).

12) Other information centres visited included:

'Diario de Juárez', local newspaper office.

'Asociación de Desarrollo Económico', a local economic development association.

13) Interviews with academics included:

In Mexico City: Dr Orlandina de Oliveira

In Tijuana, BC: Dr Jorge Carrillo, Norma Iglesias, Silvia Estrada, María Eugenia De la O, Rodolfo Cruz, Manuel Valenzuela.

In Juárez, Ch: Dr Victor Orozco, Manuel Loera, Guadalupe Santiago.

In El Paso, Tx: Dr Kathleen Staudt, Dr Jeffrery Brannon, Dr Pablo Vila.

In Albuquerque, NM: Dr Susan Tiano.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CDP Settlements in Juárez at the time of the Survey

- 1-Mexico 68**
- 2-Tierra y Libertad**
- 3-Oscar Gonzales**
- 4-Kilometro 4**
- 5- 9 de Septiembre**
- 6-Che Guevara**
- 7-Frente Independiente de Vendedores**
- 8-Primero de Mayo**
- 9-Rodolfo Fierro**
- 10-Pablo Gomez**
- 11-Ruben Jaramillo**
- 12-Lomas de San Jose**
- 13-UGTV**
- 14-Carlos Fonseca Amador**
- 15-Colinas de Juárez**
- 16-Avelina Gallegos**
- 17-Ignacio Ramirez**
- 18-Independencia 1**
- 19-Pancho Villa**
- 20-Oasis**
- 21-Lopez Mateos**
- 22-Frente Magisterial Lucio Cabanas**
- 23-Camilo Torres**
- 24-Nuevo Hipodromo**
- 25-Zaragoza**
- 26-Comite de Lucha Independencia 2**
- 27-Guadalajara**
- 28-Del Carmen**
- 29-Libertad**
- 30-Jose Marti**
- 31-Revolucion Proletaria**
- 32-Camilo CienFuegos**
- 33-Frente Inquilinario**
- 34-Frente Obrero**
- 35- Colonia Morelos**
- 36- Andres Figueroa**
- 37- Frente La Cuesta**
- 38-Frente 15 de Enero**
- 39- Frente La Paz**
- 40-Frente Diego Lucero**
- 41- Frente A.C. Sandino**
- 42-Frente Popular Raymundo Lopez**
- 43-Frente Plan de Ayala**
- 44-Frente Enriquez Guzman**
- 45- Frente Senecu**

Settlements Visited

Number	SETTLEMENT'S NAME	1=Region 1; 2= Region 2; 3= Region 3	Number of Households
1	Colonia Constitución	2	1
2	Colonia El Barreal	1	1
3	Colonia El Granjero	3	1
4	Revolucion Mexicana	2	5
5	Division del Norte	2	6
6	Zacatecas	1	1
7	Morelos 1	3	9
8	Infonavits*	3	4
9	9 de Septiembre (CDP)	2	2
10	Altavista	1	17
11	Popular	1	1
12	Toribio Ortega	2	1
13	Chaveña	1	1
14	Frente Independencia I (CDP)	2	1
15	Monterrey	1	1
16	Nuevo Hipódromo (CDP)	2	8
17	Frente Independencia II (CDP)	2	1
18	Ché Guevara CDP	2	6
19	Periodista	1	2
20	Colonia Francisco Humadero	1	1
21	Colonia Chihuahua	1	3
22	Colonia San Felipe del Real	1	2
23	Colonia Universidad	3	1
24	Partido Romero	1	1
25	Cazadores Juarenses	1	1
Total			78 households + 3 **= 82

*Infonavits or government sponsored housing visited included: Infonavit Ampliación Aeropuerto and Infonavit Angel Trias.

** Three sex workers interviewed at their work place asked me not to state the settlement they lived in. They were registered under 'unknown settlement.'

NUMBER OF SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSEHOLDS PER REGION

Number of Settlements per Region		Households interviewed
Region 1	12	32
Region 2	8	30
Region 3	5	17
Unknown		3
TOTAL	25	82

**Note: Total Number of Households Approached : 120
Full Responses : 82**

RESPONDENTS' AGE GROUP BY LOCATION OF THEIR SETTLEMENTS

REGIONS					
Age Group	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Unanimous	Total
Older women	14	1	1		16
Mature Women	9	12	3	1	25
Younger Women	9	18	12	2	41
Totals	32	31	16	3	82

Source: Household Survey, Juárez 1996

Mean of Weekly Earnings by Male and Female according to Age Category

Males/ Females	Age Group 50+	49-35	34-17	Mean for Total Cohort
1)Including Not Employed and Housewives				
Males	\$196 (\$194)	\$405(\$397)	\$503(\$472)	\$429 (\$428)
Females	\$44(\$150)	\$275(\$247)	\$218(\$362)	\$202(\$306)
2)Excluding Not Employed and Housewives				
Males	\$262(\$179)	\$456(\$392)	\$538(\$468)	\$480 (424)
Females	\$237(\$317)	\$328(\$235)	\$407(\$412)	\$360 (333)

Notes

() Figures in brackets denote standard deviation in pesos or else data dispersion.

(\$) Mexican Pesos

Source: Household Survey, Juárez, 1996

Percentage of Male and Female per Category of Weekly Earnings by Age

Age	Weekly Earnings				
	\$0	(\$1-150)	(\$151-400)	(\$401-\$700)	(\$701-\$2000)
<hr/>					
Over 50					
Males	25%(2)	25%(2)	25%(2)	25%(2)	-
Females	81%(13)	12%(2)	-	7%(1)	-
35-49					
Males	11%(2)	5.6%(1)	50%(9)	28%(5)	6%(1)
Females	16%(4)	28%(7)	36%(9)	16%(4)	4%(1)
17-34					
Males	7%(2)	6.5%(2)	48%(15)	19%(6)	20%(6)
Females	46%(19)	5%(2)	34%(14)	10%(4)	5%(2)

Notes

(\$) Mexican Pesos ; Percentages show sample distribution.
 Source: Household Survey, Juárez, 1996

Mean and Standard Variation of Male and Female Weekly Earnings by Economic Sector

Economic Sector	Males (St.D)	Females (St.D)
Informal Sector	\$472 (\$390)	\$514 (\$480)
Maquila Sector	\$363(\$206)	\$246 (\$117)
Formal Sector (Non Mq)	\$646 (\$658)	\$323 (\$237)

Notes

(\$) Mexican Pesos

Source: Household Survey, Juárez, 1996

Figures

Newspaper Advertisements

Christmas Parties and Dance- Halls In Juárez

SALON
ZARAGOZA
TARDEADA DE 4 A 10
Amenizando los Grupos
DOPSON



PAMPERS
GRUPO PARIS 2000
DISCOTEQUE
A las primeras 50 personas
Posters del Grupo DOPSON

ADMISION \$20.00

Misterio Tropical

SALON CARROUSEL
Gran Tardeada de
4 a 11 P.M.

VAMOS AL
Matibú

Despida 1979 y reciba el
"80" en un gran ambiente,
Disfrute la fantástica
PISTA DE CRISTAL
con luces multicolores,
desde las 9:00 de la noche.



JUNIOR.

8-C **CIUDAD DE JUÁREZ** Cd. Juárez, Chih., Sábado 23 de Diciembre de 1989.

SALON
EMPERADOR ESTE
31 DE
DICIEMBRE

GRAN CENA BAILE DE FIN DE AÑO
ALTERNADO CON MR. LLAMARADA
MANOLO MUÑOZ
Y SU GRUPO



Y COMO CONDUCTORA LA PRIMERA

ADMISION \$20.00
Posters Gratis
del Grupo
Ovni

Older Women and Dance-Halls

SALON MEXICO

Este Domingo 24 de Diciembre
EMPIEZA LA FIESTA!
Desde las 5 de la tarde

Y EL LUNES 25

**GRAN
TARDEADA
NAVIDEÑA**

Desde las 5 de la tarde

Y prepárese
para el gran baile
de AÑO NUEVO!

Compre sus boletos
con anticipación
**PARA EL
GRAN BAILE
DE FIN DE
AÑO**
Y abórese 5 dólares
*CANELA PURA
*LOS RIVERS de
Santa Bárbara
*TROPICAL
FORTILLO

SALON MEXICO

Un Auténtico Lugar, Para GENTE GRANDE!
Francisco Villa y 16 de Septiembre. Tel. 12-87-07

Salon Mexico
The Authentic Place for Older People [my own translation]

Taken from Diario de Juárez, 23 December 1989

Questionnaire used in Household Survey

Household Questionnaire Survey - Ciudad Juárez - Mexico, 1995-1996 This format is a concise version of the original version in Spanish

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT: MAQUILAS EMPLOYMENT, AND HOUSEHOLDS

Date of Interview _____

1. Card No _____

2. HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE No _____

NAME OF RESPONDENT _____

PLACE OF BIRTH _____

3. SETTLEMENT _____

4. AGE _____

5. EDUCATION _____

6. MARITAL STATUS _____

7. CURRENT JOB OR ACTIVITY _____

8. HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE _____

I- HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND KIN GROUPS

I D #	Name	Sex	Position in the h/h	Age	Employment	Marital Status	Education -up to what grade
1							

IA- How many of your children do not live here _____

II-CHANGES IN HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

This table shows changes in household size and composition since 1985.

Year	R	Partner	Total children in the h/h	Total relatives in the h/h	Total lodgers in the h/h	Total h/h members	Relationship to hh head	
							Why did s/he came?	Why did s/he leave?
1985								
1986								
1987								
1988								
1989								
1990								
1991								
1992								
1993								
1994								
1995								
1996								

III-EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Name	Job	Did s(h)e work last week?	Com pany size	Social security?	Number of hours per week	Type of contract	Wages per week	Contri bution to hh expen ses

Questions

- A- What is your/his/her main current job? Have you currently got any other paid job?
 B- Did you/he/she work last week? *(to find out about unemployment)*
 C- How many people are there in the company you/he/she work for? *(to further clarify formal/informal sector)*
 D- Have you got social security? *(To find out formal/informal sector)*
 E- How many hours do you work weekly?
 F- Do you have a contract? Y/N What type?
 G- How much do you earn, on average, weekly?

IV-EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Now I would like to ask you some questions on previous jobs held by you.

- A- Could you tell me, what was your first job?
 B- How old were you?
 C- At the time who were you living with
 D- What was your job when you went to live with your partner (if applicable)
 E- How old were you then? _____
 F- What was your job when you got married (if applicable)
 G- How old were you then? _____
 H- What was your first job after your first pregnancy? _____
 I- How old were you then? _____
 J- Who were you living with?
 K- Could you list in order all jobs you have had since your first one up to now?
 Could you mention if you were living with a partner then and the job he was doing by then?

Her Jobs	Time of Service	Living with partner?	His job
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Have you ever been unemployed? Y_ N_ How many times?
What is the longest you've been unemployed_____Why?

Current Partner jobs (or last partner)

His Jobs	Time of Service	Living with her?	Her job
1_____			
2_____			
3_____			
4_____			
5_____			

Has he ever been unemployed? Y_ N_ How many times?
What is the longest he's been unemployed_____

V-EXPERIENCE IN MAQUILADORAS

Have you or your current partner or husband (if applicable) ever worked for a Maquiladora? Y / N
Who?
A- You only B- Your partner only C-Both?
D-Any other household member?____Who?

If she has worked or currently works for a Maquiladora

INFORMATION ABOUT HER FIRST JOB IN A MAQUILA

How long have you/ did you work(ed) for the first maquila?
This maquila was a_____(apparel electronics, etc) factory and you worked there for _____(time).
At that time your marital status was

- A-Married
- B-Single
- C-Single Mother
- D-Living with a Partner
- E-Abandoned
- F-Separated
- G-Widowed
- H-Other

Any children? Y__N__ How many?_____

SECOND MAQUILA

How long have you/ did you worked for the second maquila?
This maquila was/is a_____(apparel electronics,etc) factory and you (have) work(ed) there for _____(time).
At that time your marital status was(is):

- A-Married
- B-Single
- C-Single Mother
- D-Living with a Partner
- E-Abandoned
- F-Separated
- G-Widowed
- H-Other

Any children? Y__N__ How many?_____

THIRD MAQUILA

How long have you/ did you worked for the third maquila?
This maquila was/is a _____(apparel electronics, etc) factory and you (have) worked there for _____(time).
At that time your marital status was(is)
A-Married
B-Single
C-Single Mother
D-Living with a Partner
E-Abandoned
F-Separated
G-Widowed
H-Other

Any children? Y__N__ How many?_____

FOURTH MAQUILA

How long have you/ did you worked for the fourth maquila?
This maquila was/is a _____(apparel electronics, etc) factory and you (have) worked there for _____(time).
At that time your marital status was(is)
A-Married
B-Single
C-Single Mother
D-Living with a Partner
E-Abandoned
F-Separated
G-Widowed
H-Other

Any children? Y__N__ How many?_____

FIFTH MAQUILA

How long have you/ did you worked for the fifth maquila?
This maquila was/is a _____(apparel electronics, etc) factory and you (have) worked there for _____(time).
At that time your marital status was (is)
A-Married
B-Single
C-Single Mother
D-Living with a Partner
E-Abandoned
F-Separated
G-Widowed
H-Other

Any children? Y__N__ How many?_____

SIXTH MAQUILA

How long have you/ did you worked for the sixth maquila?
This maquila was/is a _____(apparel electronics,etc) factory and you (have) worked there for _____(time).
At that time your marital status was(is)
A-Married
B-Single
C-Single Mother
D-Living with a Partner
E-Abandoned
F-Separated
G-Widowed
H-Other

Any children?Y__N__ How many?_____

SEVENTH MAQUILA

How long have you/ did you worked for the seventh maquila?
This maquila was/is a_____ (apparel electronics, etc) factory and you (have) worked there for _____ (time).
At that time your marital status was(is)

- A-Married
- B-Single
- C-Single Mother
- D-Living with a Partner
- E-Abandoned
- F-Separated
- G-Widowed
- H-Other

Any children? Y__N__ How many? _____

MAQUILAS AND MALE PARTNER

-Has your current partner ever worked for Maquilas?
(Which ones) Maquilas

His specific job

Time of service

1- _____	1- _____	1- _____
2- _____	2- _____	2- _____
3- _____	3- _____	3- _____
4- _____	4- _____	4- _____
5- _____	5- _____	5- _____

V-DOMESTIC LABOUR

Activity	Who does, name	Rel/ship to h/head	Age	Time (months, years) since they/s/he started to carry out this task as their/his/her duty
Food Shopping				
Cooking breakfast for h/h members				
Lunch				
Dinner				
Washing dishes				
Cleaning place				
Washing clothes				
Yard/garden cleaning				
Child Care morning				
Afternoon				
Night				
Week-Ends				
Tending livestock				
Nursing the ill				
Sewing clothes				
Fetching water				
Other (Animals)				

VI-HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING

A- Who takes most decisions in the household?

B- Do you always agree? Y/N

C-What do you normally disagree about?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

D-Who has the last word?_____

Budget	Who decides, relationship to the household head and age	COD E Sex	CODE Age	CODE Relationship to household head
Food				
Clothes				
Education				
Housing				
Electric Appliances				
Other				

Who keeps and distributes the money?

Has it always been like that?

When did it change_____Why?

C- Have you noticed if you take more decisions at home since you started to work?
Y / N

D- Are you taking

- 1- More decisions
- 2- Less decisions
- 3- Some decisions

How much are the household expenses weekly??

VII-COURTSHIP

- A- How old were you when the relationship with your first boyfriend started? _____
- B- How long did you go out with him for? _____
(If first boyfriend is current partner, state
- C- What was your main activity or occupation then _____
- D- How old was him? _____
- E- What was his job or activity then _____
- F- Where specifically did you meet him?

VIII-NUPTIALITY AND MARRIAGE

- (If applicable)* How long have you been living on your own?
- Are you currently living with a partner? _____ Have you ever been married or lived with a partner?
- Once, Twice, _____

FIRST RELATIONSHIP / FIRST MARRIAGE

- Where did you meet him?
- How old were you when you moved in together?
- Who proposed (1) to live together(2) to get married?
- Do you currently live together
- If got married, Which marriage ceremony did you have?*
- How long have *(did)* you been living *(/lived)* together?
- How long have you been *(/were)* married for?

SECOND RELATIONSHIP / SECOND MARRIAGE

- Where did you meet him?
- How old were you when you moved in together?
- Who proposed (1) to live together(2) to get married?
- Do you currently live together
- If got married, Which marriage ceremony did you have?*
- How long have *(did)* you been living *(/lived)* together?
- How long have you been *(were)* married for?

THIRD RELATIONSHIP / THIRD MARRIAGE

- Where did you meet him?
- How old were you when you moved in together?
- Who proposed (1) to live together (2) to get married?
- Do you currently live together
- If got married, Which marriage ceremony did you have?*
- How long have *(did)* you been living *(/lived)* together?
- How long have you been *(/were)* married for?

Semi-structured Interviews

A smaller number of respondents (38) were interviewed using an open ended format which intended to compile respondents views on maquila employment and the impact on women's lives over time.

Life and Work Histories

Detailed information of women's life from childhood through adolescence up to the moment of the interview was gathered with particular focus on their employment patterns and gender dynamics at the household level. More specifically the maquila industry was kept central in the analysis of work histories with reference to marriage, and adult life (when applicable). These data were transcribed immediately after the interview. Next, I shall present some additional information of various respondents whose life histories played an important role in the data presentation and analysis of this thesis.

Selected Life Histories

Respondents	Childhood	Selected Parts from her Adolescence	Marital Life	Moment of the Interview
Senior Women Benita age 61 Region 1 Place of Birth: Small Town Age Arrival in Juárez: 24 Level of Education: Completed Primary	In rural areas	She arrived in Juárez when she turned 24 years of age. Benita and her husband arrived in search for better job opportunities for him. As her husband lost his job in the mine in the town where they lived (Matamoros), Benita's father gave her some money to buy a small piece of land for her and her husband. Once they bought it, her husband and her father built a room with cardboard box. As there was no bathroom, their bathroom was a hole dug by the room (which when filled was covered with sand and another hole then had to be dug in). Soon after she had her first baby girl. Her main concern then was the cold weather and the lack of drinking water (water was taken from the local ditch). The strong winds knocked the room on several occasions and she had to stay with their neighbours. It was only after 10 years of living in the hill that they managed to have cemented walls in their room and later got access to electricity.	In Juárez, their marital life was not free from conflict. As her husband found no job he started trading spices in a local market. His anxiety over not being able to make ends meet meant that she had to deal with the weak state of the place they lived in and the daily living in the hill. On countless occasions she repaired the house on her own and found little comfort from him. In her words "I was his personal construction worker. He used to complain about our place and the poverty we lived in. He criticised my lack of strength a lot and gave me so many orders. I packed the spices, looked after the children and looked after the place. I was going crazy with him!"	At the moment of the interview, Benita had 8 children, (one of them as an adolescent was found drowned in the local ditch), she lived with her youngest daughter and her husband. As her husband's hernia impeded him to work as a plumber as he had done so often in the past, and given Benita's lack of paid employment then, they relied on their daughter's wages to financially support the household. Benita occasionally looked after one of her granddaughters and did voluntary work with the local church with a view to counteract juvenile delinquency.
Tila age 59 Region 1 Place of Birth: Ciudad Delicias, Ch Age Arrival in Juárez 20 Level of Education Incomplete primary	In rural areas	After having eloped with her boyfriend aged 18, as a fourteen year old Tila lived in a rancho for nearly 5 years. Difficulties in the agricultural sector obliged her and her husband to look for new employment opportunities in Juárez. Together with their two children, Tila and her husband arrived to a deserted place in the hill in Juárez, to build a room of card board box and corrugated metal.	Domestic violence, poverty and hard work in the house were the recorded memories of Tila's first marriage. Once in Juárez, as her father realised Tila's marriage difficulties he took her and the two children to live with him. As a domestic servant and while living with her father, Tila met her second husband. With her second husband she had one more child. Finally, after 14 years of marriage, her husband's alcoholism got so bad that she felt forced to leave him.	At the moment of the interview Tila lived on her own in a house and worked as a domestic servant in El Paso. She occasionally cooked lunch for her son who visited her regularly. Tila also took part in the children's rehabilitation program for cholos set up by older women in the neighbourhood

Respondents	Urban Childhood	Selected parts from her Adolescence	Marital Life	Time of the Interview
<p>Mature Women Lupita age 38 Region 2 Place of Birth Juárez Level of Education Completed Primary</p>	<p>As a child Lupita lived with her grandmother. She never knew her mother. When her father got married for the second time, she did not like her father's wife and spent most of her time outside the house. As she did not get along with her step-mother her father threw her out of the house and she moved in with her grandmother. When she turned 13 she began to sell food stuffs.</p>	<p>Once she completed primary school Lupita wanted to go to University. Her father, who could have paid the required fee for her education, refused to do so on the grounds that she would soon forget all that she could learn in college. Later, Lupita's father instead offered to pay her a secretarial course. As Lupita got angry with him, she refused to study and instead applied for a job in a maquila. Before turning 15 Lupita got pregnant and the father of the child, a line supervisor, did not accept any responsibility for the child. Soon after her grandmother died Lupita squatted in a CDP settlements and built a room for her and her daughter. With the help of her half-brother she built a room and a kitchen later on. As a maquila worker she became involved in the CDP movement and made sure her own house had electricity and water supply.</p>	<p>When Cuco, her partner moved in with her, Lupita did not want to have anymore children. Unfortunately, her doctor told her he would not be able to sterilise her unless she had another child. Lupita had her second child with Cuco and whilst it was her own place she did most of the domestic work. However, she stated that as it was her place, she took most household decisions as well. Lupita felt that in her marriage she did not have a very good deal but felt that no woman locally had it, anyway. In fact, she felt she could have done a lot worse. This, she put down to the fact that she was not ready to take hard time from him and that if he did not behave she was ready to ask him to leave. Having said that, she complained about his bad temper.</p>	<p>At the moment of the interview Lupita lived with her 14-year-old daughter and her partner. She worked occasionally cooking in the bus station's cafeteria and often washed clothes for bus and lorry drivers in transit in Juárez. She also did paperwork for working friends and neighbours in exchange for money, that required time-consuming queueing. Additionally, at the time of the interview, she took active part in the struggle to get legal documents for settlers squatting in CDP areas. As a CDP leader she felt strongly about women's necessary involvement in politics. She was also saving money for her youngest daughter's 15-year birthday party.</p>
<p>Mary Jesús age 43 Region 1 Place of Birth La Pinta, Coahuila Age Arrival in Juárez 21 Educational Level Completed Primary</p>	<p>Although Mary Jesus first arrived in Juárez at the age of 9 she continued visiting her relatives in La Pinta until she finally married at the age of 14.</p>	<p>As a partnered woman she lived in La Pinta. She finally decided to leave the household and move to Juárez She arrived in Juárez with two children and the money that her father gave her to buy her own place. Soon after, she met her second husband and got married at the age of 21. She had two more children and began to work as a domestic servant in El Paso.</p>	<p>Despite her husband's continuous recriminations as a married woman Mary Jesus continued working for a wage outside the household as she felt the need to economically provide for her children. She maintained that it is very difficult for a woman to work and be a wife and a mother, but in her case, she considered that her children contributed greatly to the completion of their own domestic tasks.</p>	<p>At the moment of the interview, Mary Jesus lived with her husband and four children and considered herself a full-time housewife. Her husband did no domestic work in the household and she took all household decisions.</p>

Note: the issue of female house ownership opens up interesting questions in the area of gender roles and relations in Juárez; Low-income women's political participation in the CDP movement also deserves close academic consideration.

Source: Life Histories, Juárez, 1996

Respondents	Childhood	Selected Parts from her Adolescence	Marital Life	Moment of the Interview
Younger Women Berta Alicia age 27 Region 2 Place of Birth: Santiago Guerrero Age Arrival in Juárez: 6 Level of Education: Completed Primary	In rural areas until age of 6	As soon as Berta Alicia finished the Primary school she and her friend decided to apply for a job in the same maquila. As a 15-year old she enjoyed the company of friends at work. She would usually arrive from work to her place and week-ends she would go with friends to the cinema or to a shopping centre for an ice-cream. Soon after she decided to enrol in a commerce and secretarial course. She started early in the morning and after working for the maquila she would go straight to the polytechnic. As she grew older, she changed to a larger maquila and there she met new friends and started going to dance-halls. In a bigger maquila, Berta Alicia stated that her greatest concern became the production standards. Later on, she met a young man from the settlement who she later married.	Berta Alicia married and had a daughter. Soon after she got married she realised that her husband was drug-addict and decided to get divorced. As a mother of a very young girl she returned to paid employment in the maquilas and to live with her mother. She combined periods of work in the maquilas with periods as a full-time mother at her own mother's place.	At the moment of the interview, Berta Alicia, lived with her mother, her brother and her daughter. She was not working but intended to go back to paid employment. She was considering a maquila job. At her mother's place, Berta Alicia did not contribute any money to the household finances and helped with domestic work. Her mother's continuous recriminations made her want to leave the household but with no money or where to go with her child she felt she had no choice.
Leti age 25 Region 2 Place of Birth: Durango Age Arrival in Juárez 8 Level of Education Incomplete Secondary	In rural areas	Leti started to work in a maquila when she was 16 years old. She recalled going out dancing to dance-halls with colleagues from work. When she turned 17, she married Chuy and stopped working in the maquila. Then she moved in with her in-laws and had three children.	Living with her in-laws, Leti maintained was very difficult. It was only when she, her husband and her children, moved to their own place that she felt the relationship with her husband improved. This said, she maintained that serious conflict arose over time as a result of the household's economic difficulties.	At the moment of the interview, Leti was not working in a maquila and remained in the household. Her husband, a decorator economically supported her and the three children. This said, Leti, relied heavily on the economic and emotional support provided by her own sister and her mother who happened to live in the same neighbourhood. At the time of the interview, Leti was in charge of all household finances and did all domestic work. She felt her relationship with her husband improved when she stayed in the home with the children and turned difficult when she worked for the maquilas.

Source: Life Histories, Juárez, 1996

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