

ES UNA FLOR NUESTRO CUERPO: PRESERVATION OF TRADITION IN A
MEXICAN
COMMUNITY

by

AVIS DARLENE MYSYK

A thesis
presented to the University of Manitoba
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
in
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Sólo venimos a dormir, sólo venimos a soñar:
no es verdad, no es verdad que venimos a vivir
en la tierra.
En yerba de primavera venimos a convertirmos:
llegan a reverdecer, llegan a abrir sus corolas
nuestros corazones,
es una flor nuestro cuerpo:
da algunas flores y se seca.*

We only come to sleep, we only come to dream:
it is not true, it is not true that we come
to live on earth.
We come to turn ourselves into a spring herb:
our hearts come to be renewed, come to open
their petals,
our body is a flower:
it gives forth some blossoms and then withers.

*Indigenous poetry quoted in Fernando Horcasitas,
Aromas y dulces para nuestros difuntos. Lo
efímero y eterno del arte popular mexicano 2:
669-726 (1971).

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the possible reasons underlying the preservation of religious tradition in Huaquechula, a Mexican community that is integrated both politically and economically into a regional and national context. Specifically, I focus upon the fiesta of Todos Santos, a prehispanic celebration superimposed by Catholicism held in commemoration of the dead. By demonstrating the drawbacks of using strictly functionalist or psychological approaches to explain this phenomenon, I instead illustrate the usefulness of viewing the community historically as one of middle peasants, and of inquiring into the influence of the church and, more recently, of the state in encouraging this two-week long celebration. I also suggest that the preservation of religious tradition, which I had the opportunity to document over the course of eleven months of fieldwork, may be a source of cohesion and identity for community members, a defense against negative influences from without.

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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Huaquechula is a primarily agrarian community of some 3,000 inhabitants and cabecera (head town) of the same-named municipio (municipality) located approximately 50 kilometers southwest of the state capital of Puebla, Puebla (see Maps 1 to 6). In spite of the fact that Huaquechula is fully integrated¹ into Mexico's present social formation, it is one of the few villages in the region² that still preserves its traditional fiesta (holy day celebration) system. The most important fiesta of the year, Todos Santos, is of prehispanic origin superimposed by Catholicism and held in commemoration of the dead. By way of a case study that focuses upon the fiesta of Todos Santos in Huaquechula, this thesis examines the possible reasons underlying such strong preservation of tradition.

¹ By fully integrated, I include such factors as market integration and the beginnings of the formation of a class of wage-laborers. In addition to being the political seat of the municipality and the religious center for nearby villages, Huaquechula also has a state-run health center staffed by interns who are usually trained in Puebla and four schools whose teachers are for the most part non-residents.

² I refer here to the Valley of Atlixco (see Map 3) as a region.

Many community studies in the tradition of Redfield's "folk-urban continuum" (1941) maintain that outside influences from "modern urbanized society" act upon an hypothetically isolated and homogeneous peasantry and almost always result in cultural disorganization, secularization and individualization. Reliance on this model to explain the phenomena of culture change or stability, however, neglects other more important factors which bind a peasantry³ to the larger social formation of which it is an integral part. Consequently, numerous criticisms have been levelled at Redfield's approach as being idealistic or lacking in historical or functional insight (see Murdock 1943, Lewis 1951, Miner 1952, Steward 1956).

Another approach, still in use, which attempts to explain preservation of tradition (see Nelson 1971, Kennedy 1978, Kearney 1984) stems from Foster's "image of limited good" (1965). This imposes an inherent backwardness on a peasantry's attitude toward change. Essentially, Foster argues that many Mesoamerican peasants see the "good" things in the world, e.g. money and success, to be in limited and finite supply. Thus, in order to attain these goals, they must do so at other people's expense. For reasons that will be expanded upon shortly, it may be briefly stated here that conservatism in the face of oppression often serves as a

³ I understand "peasantry" to mean an historically-determined class of small landowners whose productive labor supports an elite or bourgeois class as well as provides for its own subsistence needs.

multi-faceted strategy for economic survival (Huizer 1970).

Wolf (1957:9) aptly states that even the most closed corporate peasant communities "are neither simple 'survivals' nor the results of 'culture lag'...They exist, because their functions are contemporaneous". Exactly how this has occurred has been a subject of debate among recent scholars (see Bartra 1974, Palerm 1980, Cockcroft 1983), but one could infer from Wolf's statement that culture change or stability is largely due to the articulation of two or more modes of production which mutually reinforce and reproduce one another within a particular social formation. In the case of Mexico, I refer specifically to a dominant capitalist mode and a subordinate non-capitalist mode of production.⁴ The response to this domination, which is not only economic but political, juridicial and ideological as well, manifests itself in various ways such as the persistence of agricultural techniques considered elsewhere to be outmoded, adherence to religious beliefs, or passive or hostile distrust of others--reactions which serve to obscure the class relations which give rise to them.

As its principle goal, this thesis sets out to determine the function of the fiesta of Todos Santos in Huaquechula through a class analysis of rural Mexico and the economic role Huaquechula has come to perform in the maintenance of

⁴ Although the term has limited use as I explain in Chapter 3, for the purpose of my argument, by "non-capitalist" I mean "peasant" mode of production.

this class structure. The approach does not involve a narrow economic determinism. As Marx (1978:4) states:

The sum total of [the] relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general.

Other factors than economic, then, also help to preserve tradition in Huaquechula. These include the community's prehispanic roots, encouragement by way of a state competition for quality of ofrendas (altars), community pride, expectations of participation, and Huaquechula's position as political and religious center of the municipio. As a secondary aim, this thesis will examine in some detail the process of religious syncretism that has occurred between prehispanic and Catholic belief and ritual to produce the fiesta of Todos Santos as presently practiced in Huaquechula. The need for this investigation came from the absence of other than simply descriptive information regarding this most important celebration in Mexico.

Actually, the strength of this thesis may lie more in the documentation of the fiesta of Todos Santos than in its theoretical analysis for several reasons. First, anthropological studies that focus specifically upon preservation of religious tradition in Mexico are relatively rare. Some excellent work has been carried out in Mayan areas (see Cancian 1965, Vogt 1976, Brintnall 1979) where

the impact of the Spanish Conquest and the dynamics of religious syncretism were such that the Mayans retained their "pagan" beliefs at the core of their religion (Madsen 1967). With regard to Mexico, however, interest centers around such issues as land tenure which, although of primary importance, tend to neglect other socio-cultural phenomena. Secondly, it was almost impossible to locate comprehensive censuses and maps of Huaquechula other than what had been produced for general public interest. Lastly, it is the opinion of several Mexican authors (Espejel 1975, Becerril Straffon and Ríos Szalay 1981) that, given the rapid economic changes and commercialization of crafts in their country, the preservation of tradition (artistic or otherwise) can only be accomplished by depositing handicrafts in museums and by recording the words of the artisans involved. Through description and photographs, this is essentially what I have tried to do in this work, recording as faithfully as possible a tradition that in a matter of years may no longer exist.

1.2 CHOICE OF COMMUNITY

The data for this thesis were collected over an eleven month period (19 December 1984 to 10 November 1985) in San Martín Huaquechula as it is formally known. Since I had originally intended to focus mainly upon pottery production, my choice of the state of Puebla was purely subjective,

based upon the sheer aesthetic appeal of its characteristic ceramics. Locating a community in which to conduct my study was slightly more problematic. Upon making the acquaintance of Doctor Eduardo Merlo Juárez of the Centro Regional Puebla-Tlaxcala del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, I was directed to three potential communities: San Miguel Tenextatiloyan in the Sierra Norte de Puebla where a Talavera⁵ factory was to be constructed in the near future; San Matías Cocoyotla, a colonia of Cholula and primary center of production and distribution of utilitarian pottery for Cholula and satellite communities; and Huaquechula, known for its ceremonial ware produced only for Todos Santos. I was directed away from such larger centers as Puebla, Izúcar de Matamoros and Acatlán de Osorio since they had apparently been "overstudied", whereas little or no information existed on San Miguel, San Matías or Huaquechula. All three communities met what I considered to be fairly basic requirements in the selection of a research site as outlined by Fried (1954:20) and which I adapted to my own situation:

1. Problem orientation: hand-crafted pottery manufacture formed part of the people's means of subsistence.

⁵ A fifteenth-century pottery style from Spain, the idea of which was transferred to ceramic factories of Puebla where Mexican design was combined with its original Arabic and Chinese influence to produce the now famous Talavera de Puebla.

2. Sampling/community size: in view of my time and experience limitations, a more thorough study could be conducted in a small town rather than in a city.
3. Language facility: Spanish was the predominant language spoken, hence I would require no interpreter.
4. Accessibility: all three communities could be reached within three hours or less by bus from the city of Puebla.
5. Personal ties: letters of introduction would be provided by Dr. Merlo.

After having seen a short television documentary of the town, I decided to conduct my study in Huaquechula. I made several visits to the community, once with a letter of introduction to a respected storeowner through whom I came to know several potters. Later I was placed with a family through making the acquaintance of their compadres in the nearest major center of Atlixco. With regard to the other two communities, I had no guarantee as to when the Talavera factory would be in operation in San Miguel, and San Matías had recently been the subject of a master's thesis.

1.3 DATA COLLECTION

According to Spradley (1979:60), the degree of involvement in my research would be considered "high" and the type of participation "active":

The active participant seeks to do what other people are doing, not merely to gain acceptance, but to more fully learn the cultural rules for behavior. Active participation begins with observations, but as knowledge of what others do grows, the ethnographer tries to learn the same behavior.

Thus I sought to be actively involved in almost every aspect of family and village life from attending mass and festivities both religious and secular, to assisting in the weekly Sunday market, to working in the fields. For the first few months I conducted no research per se since I had unwittingly arrived shortly after the fiesta of Todos Santos had taken place. Instead, I spent the time adjusting to life in Huaquechula and trying to gain a basic rapport with the villagers. In fact, this situation was to my advantage since by the time I began conducting interviews I was already a familiar and accepted figure in the community which made data collection easier. Also, my understanding of and participation in the celebrations for Todos Santos were enhanced by my relatively long stay: not only had I learned many of the cultural "rules" of behavior by then, but my accumulated knowledge of village life opened up a wealth of insights into the meanings and functions of this elaborate fiesta.

From April until November (the first and second of November are the actual Catholic holy days of Todos Santos), I carried out a series of interviews with various craftspeople who produce the three main handicrafts for the fiesta: decorative ceramics, taffeta flower arrangements and sugar figures. María, my main informant and a married daughter of the family with whom I lived, was many times responsible for introducing me to craftspeople. We would often go to the house of a craftsperson where María would explain who I was and what I was doing in Huaquechula. We would then make an appointment for me to come back alone to conduct an informal interview. Other times, a craftsperson I would be visiting would introduce me to another. As I became more well-known, my opportunities for interviews, as well as to assist in actual craft production, increased accordingly.

Working only from a general list of topics and questions I felt were pertinent from previous library research, I would arrive at a house at the specified time and chat informally while the craftsperson worked. In this way, I was not taking up valuable time which could have been spent, for instance, on domestic chores. Also, where language may have been a barrier, I could see for myself the production techniques and put them into my own words in my field notes later. Since all crafts are made in stages over a period of time, I would always return at a later date to watch another

aspect of production. Then I could clarify certain questions I may have asked before, as well as ask new ones. These repeated visits served to build a closer bond between the craftspeople and myself.

During the time of the fiesta itself, I was invited by everyone to participate fully in all aspects: to visit the houses where ofrendas had been constructed, to take photographs and to partake of the customary food offered to all guests. Even on the day of "la plaza grande", the huge market day on the 31st of October, my usual obligation of assisting at the family's puesto (table) was waived and I passed the day attending mass, taking photographs and making whimsical purchases from the array of vendors.

The greatest obstacle I encountered in my research was actually finding the craftspeople working when they said they would be, for if something more important came up, craft production would be set aside for a day or even a month. Making bread to sell at a fiesta, constructing a water storage tank, religious obligations or various stages of field work such as planting are just a few examples. If the situation permitted, I would stay and chat anyway rather than leave immediately. During these times, I would be the one "interviewed" which allowed people to get to know me better. At various times I would bring small gifts to my informants, especially if I knew their specific interests: a Canadian dollar for a coin collection, a clay candle-holder

from another part of Mexico, postcards of my country, photo books of prehispanic crafts or, if all else failed, I would bring flowers.

It was in this cultural context, then, that I carried out research to determine the possible reasons for the preservation of tradition in the village of Huaquechula.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this section of my thesis I will examine two popular approaches to community studies in Mesoamerica: Robert Redfield's "folk-urban continuum" and George Foster's "image of limited good". These two orientations do not exhaust the scholarly efforts by other anthropologists in the area of community studies and culture change, but they have provided models for many more contemporary works in this field. In addition, although both perspectives have been heavily criticized, they do exhibit merits as well as shortcomings. In this light, I present a critical analysis of them as they may apply to my concerns with the preservation of tradition in Huaquechula.

2.1 THE FOLK-URBAN CONTINUUM

The 1930's marked the beginning of a new approach to Mesoamerican community studies with the publication of Redfield's Tepoztlán: A Mexican Village (1930). This text reflected a general trend in anthropology away from culture history towards functionalism. Close association with Chicago sociologists led Redfield to develop his "folk-(or rural-)urban continuum" model in which two ideal types of

societies are viewed as polarities at opposite ends of a spectrum. The folk society is characterized as:

small, isolated, nonliterate, and homogeneous, with a strong sense of group solidarity. The ways of living are conventionalized into that coherent system which we call 'a culture'. Behavior is traditional, spontaneous, uncritical, and personal; there is no legislation or habit of experiment and reflection for intellectual ends. Kinship, its relationships and institutions, are the type categories of experience and the familial group is the unit of action. The sacred prevails over the secular; the economy is one of status rather than of the market (Redfield 1947:293).

Redfield regards urban society as the absence or opposite of these traits, and he identifies three main effects of the transition from folk to urban: disorganization, secularization and individualization. Although he takes isolation and homogeneity of a community together as an independent variable and disorganization, secularization and individualization as dependent variables, Redfield makes no specific attempt to explain how the variables interrelate (Miner 1952:530). Nor does he explain why decreasing isolation and increasing heterogeneity in particular should cause such negative effects. Tax's work in Guatemala, essentially a test of Redfield's model in an area other than Yucatán, revealed those societies to be

small...homogeneous in beliefs and practices...with relationships impersonal...and with familial organization weak, with life secularized, and with individuals acting more from economic or other personal advantage than from any deep conviction or thought of the social good (Tax 1939:467).

The possibility that in the presence of a money economy, individualism and secular interests may exist alongside homogeneity and isolation led Redfield to concede that if his proposed cause and effect relationship could indeed be established, "it would not follow that these [decreasing isolation, increasing heterogeneity] are the only causes of these effects [disorganization, secularization, individualization] or that these are the only covariant or causal relationships to be discovered in the same data" (Redfield 1941:344).

Redfield--in his initial studies of Tepoztlán (1930) and Chan Kom (1934) into later works such as The Folk Culture of Yucatán (1941) and restudy of Chan Kom (1950)--viewed small communities as independent isolates but he ignored their history in favor of determining the functional interconnections between social institutions within them. Yet even this concern for function has been questioned:

since he does not interpret cultural forms as solutions to problems posed by the nature of the human organism and the conditions of geography and collective life, and since he makes intra-cultural correlations only on a highly formal level. He makes no effort to relate culture...to the mechanisms of individual psychology. Nor does he employ his data to elucidate the processes of invention, borrowing, selective elimination, and integration...In his fundamental theoretical orientation, the author appears in many respects closer to the 'sociologistic' writers of the late nineteenth century than to the dynamic theorists of the twentieth [since] he is fond of playing with paired polar concepts (Murdock 1943:136).

Redfield himself admits to the ideal nature of his folk and urban types. They were

created only because through [them] we may hope to understand reality. [Their] function is to suggest aspects of real societies which deserve study, and especially to suggest hypotheses as to what, under certain defined conditions, may be generally true about society (Redfield 1947:295).

In subsequent works such as The Little Community (1955) and Peasant Society and Culture (1956), Redfield develops a sense of importance both for history and for the need to see the interdependence between the polar concepts of the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition. This change of focus did not help Redfield's credibility, however, for Lewis's restudy of Tepoztlán (1951) provided one of the most critical comments to date concerning the futility of the folk and urban as polar concepts. His six criticisms may be summarized as follows (from Lewis 1951:432-440):

1. Factors other than the city as a source of change are excluded or neglected.
2. Homogeneity and isolation may vary independently from other variables.
3. Presumed linked or interdependent variables may on closer analysis actually be recognized to be independent variables.
4. The concepts of folk or urban types are too general and require historical data to discover any cause and effect relationships.

5. The continuum does not take into account psychological variables which give insight into the character of the people.
6. A system of value judgements underlying the continuum depicts peasants as being equal to Rousseau's "noble savage".

Even so, a significant number of community studies appeared after the publication of Redfield's Tepoztlán which did not depart to any great degree from his orientation. Miner, in his study of a rural French Canadian community (St. Denis: A French-Canadian Parish 1939), concluded that this culture was intermediate on the continuum due to the impact of urban industrial civilization. However, even though

[the] seven hundred inhabitants of this...community participate to some extent in the economic and political structure of the modern, civilized world...they are still sufficiently isolated to preserve in large measure the social stability and cultural homogeneity characteristic of unacculturated aboriginal peoples (Murdock 1940:323-324).

Mintz (1953), in his turn, proposed the addition of yet another "culture type" to supplement Redfield's continuum, that of the henequen plantation. According to Mintz,

the plantation represents a special kind of industrial organization. Many of the features of life generally associated with 'urban', 'Western', or 'modern' society, such as a wage-labor pattern, standardized wage rates, and industrialization, are introduced through plantation organization and seem to produce particular sociocultural effects. Yet the people are not affected in terms of an 'urban' or 'Western' complex but rather in terms of the impact of specific innovations. The

plantation system may thus bring about a very distinctive social and cultural reorganization...something which conceivably might not fit at all on the folk-urban continuum (Mintz 1953:138).

Such research would then aim at determining whether or not Redfield's posited causal hypotheses have any predictive power. Spicer conducted a study that examined the phenomenon of culture contact upon a group of native Yaquis from Sonora (Pascua: A Yaqui Village in Arizona 1940). His conclusions differ somewhat from classic functionalism, though, in that

[he] finds that the Yaqui of Pascua have been forced to abandon their former economic system, yet much of the ceremonial, ritual and value systems have undergone little alteration attributable to the economic changes. He indeed suggests a strong possibility that slight modifications of the social system will enable the economic activities to operate in a separate compartment for an indefinite period (Beals 1941:44).

This was something that Redfield, by focusing on the functional whole, could never have come to terms with and which led Steward (1956:565) to comment that

[a] cultural whole does not change in its totality at each moment of history. Particular influences penetrate parts of it and spread to other parts...This point of view might not be thoroughly holistic, since various elements might survive the change.

One of the more recent community studies that has appeared as a critique of both functional and cognitive approaches is Smith's The Fiesta System and Economic Change (1977), a study of folk-Catholic fiestas in Guatemala and their role in village and national life. By assuming a "political-ecology" stance, Smith decries both functionalist and cognitive perspectives for their neglect of the historical interaction of national level politics and the local conditions and resources in trying to understand the motivations behind fiesta sponsorship and its wider social significance. Oddly enough, Smith adopts Redfield's folk-urban continuum on which he places his four sample communities. In addition, although he accuses Cancian's study of Zinacantan (1965) of being insular and functionalist, Smith's alternative is no different. In place of the fiesta system seen as a "savings leveler", it is now called a "savings motivator" since a concerted effort to collect the necessary resources was made after the fiesteros accepted a cargo⁶ and not before. But his conclusion is the same as that of the many functionalists whom he criticizes: "The fiesta system, in short, is an institutionalized reaction by Indians to the way they were economically, politically, and socially incorporated into the colonial state" (Smith 1977:15). Thus, while Smith begins by recognizing an interplay of factors responsible for change in ritual, he mistakenly assigns priority to the

⁶ The sponsoring of a religious fiesta.

political realm. As a result, a potentially interesting contribution to the understanding of changing relations between Indian communities and the national society deteriorates into a defense of Smith's placement of his communities on the folk-urban continuum. This leaves his original questions about the cargo system totally unanswered.

If one were to apply Redfield's thesis to my own study of Huaquechula, the problem would arise as to where, exactly, one would place the village on the folk-urban continuum and according to what criteria. A purely functionalist description would superficially reveal a semi-isolated and traditional community that exhibits few signs of disorganization, secularization or individualization. Strong kinship relations and institutions, as well as religious beliefs, are dominant characteristics of the village. However, the fact that Huaquechula is the political and religious center of the municipality and that it is integrated into a market economy presupposes contact with urban society. Even if Huaquechula could arbitrarily be placed in some intermediate position between rural and urban, the problem arises as to which criteria could be used to do so. Sociological quantifiers such as income reveal little and the degree to which certain variables occur (how isolated? how traditional?) are meaningless, even impossible to determine. A static and functionalist

approach to the study of preservation of tradition in Huaquechula would explain nothing and it could only lead to confusion when faced with the fact that through the historical process the community in question has been fully integrated into the social formation of the country yet it still retains many of Redfield's "folk" characteristics. Nonetheless, the folk-urban continuum model provided a basis for the development of more complex and insightful constructs with regard to the nature and course of culture change.

2.2 THE IMAGE OF LIMITED GOOD

In the mid-1960's, concern for the rapid and uneven development that Third World countries such as Mexico and Guatemala were undergoing led to a series of studies that viewed the community as an obstacle to social, economic and political change. One leader in this field was George Foster who developed the concept of the "image of limited good". He explains it as follows:

[Broad] areas of peasant behavior are patterned in such a fashion as to suggest that peasants view their social, economic, and natural universes...as [ones] in which all of the desired things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety, exist in finite quantity and are always in short supply, as far as the peasant is concerned. Not only do these and all other 'good things' exist in finite and limited quantities, but in addition there is no way directly within peasant power to increase the available quantities (Foster 1965:296).

A corollary to this is that if "good" exists in limited amounts, individuals or families can improve their lot only at the expense of others, and this becomes a threat to the stability of the community. The mechanism by which essential stability is maintained requires "an agreed-upon, socially acceptable, preferred norm of behavior" (Foster, p. 302), one backed by rewards and sanctions that ensure adherence to this norm. Under threatening circumstances to their security, Foster (p. 301) states that peasants "almost always" react by assuming an extreme individualism characterized by envy, distrust and lack of cooperation. Foster (quoted in Huizer 1970:308) explains this in the following manner:

The behavior of a peasant villager, however stubborn and unreasoned it may seem to an outsider, is the product of centuries of experience. It is an effective protective device in a relatively unchanging world. It is less effective in a rapidly industrializing world, and ultimately it becomes a hindrance. But the peasant is pragmatic; he is not going to discard the clothing that has served him well until he is convinced that he will profit by doing so.

In his restudy of Tzintzuntzan, Michoacán--a synthesis of his notions of the "image of limited good" and the "dyadic contract"-- Foster (1967:7-8) also states that:

Peasant society...represents the rural expression of national, class-structured, economically complex preindustrial civilizations...[The] peasant is essentially powerless in large areas of life, because the basic decisions affecting villagers are made by members of other classes. Political activity is narrow in scope, for major control is exercised from national or provincial centers. Economically, peasants are dependent on forces that operate well beyond their local boundaries.

Thus, Foster is aware of the importance of both historical process and class conflict in explaining cultural phenomena. Yet, instead of examining the larger system of which a peasant community is a part for the source of the problem, he looks inside the community itself in order to support his hypothesis that "the values of rural peoples, especially those at the bottom of the rural stratification system, hinder their ability to respond to opportunities for change" (Chambers and Young 1979:51).

In spite of the problems with Foster's "image of limited good" model, many anthropologists still adhere to it. For example, in dealing with the peasant community of Tonalá ten miles from Guadalajara, Diaz (1966) tries to understand how a traditional life style can be preserved in such close proximity to an urban industrial center. Essentially, Diaz's rather unclear results lack congruence (Hunt 1968:122), but the theme of her findings reflect Foster's influence. We see this when she writes:

Peasants live in a social world in which they are economically and politically disadvantaged. They have neither sufficient capital nor power to make an impression on the urban society. But they have no illusions about their position. Indeed, often they have no notion at all of that imaginary world which offers social mobility, entrepreneurs..., and the possibility of economic growth, rather than a stability fluctuating on the edge of disaster (Diaz 1967:56).

Kearney, in his various works on "world view" (1972, 1984), also recognizes the "primary role of external forces and infrastructure as shapers of world view" (Kearney 1984:171).

However, in spite of his insightful historical and economic analyses he, too, reduces the phenomenon of peasant conservatism to a problem with the cognitive orientation of peasants based upon his system of inductive logic.

Chambers and Young (1979:51-52) defend Foster's and others' perspective of culture change by stating that:

It has become fashionable to be highly critical of such studies because of their tendency to lay the blame for underdevelopment on the least powerful members of society, but they are nonetheless worth our attention. The fact that most of the studies are devoted to Tarascan communities and that several of the investigators...were associated with the CREFAL⁷ project suggests that their conclusions might be bound to a particular set of circumstances.

Admittedly, Foster's orientation related to the process of planned community development in Third World countries and thus is not geared as much to theory as it is to practice. Foster himself (1960:178) comments that:

It is difficult for me to understand why, in the face of visible evidence to the contrary, so much work in community development and related programs is based on the starry-eyed assumption that there is something 'naturally' cooperative about peasants. It is just not so, and there are good reasons in addition to suspicion based on economic activity.

Foster's approach ultimately proves to be little more than a psychological reductionism in which the image of limited good is seen as "a pathological state of mind, incompatible with the need for development and the great obstacle to becoming part of the middle-class mentality of keeping up

⁷ The United Nations Center for Fundamental Education in Latin America planned social development project.

with the Joneses" (Huizer 1972:54).

Huizer (1970) prefers to use the phrase "culture of repression" (coined by Holmberg 1966) to describe the peasant situation. In a critique of the perspective taken by those involved in community development, he comments that: "The resistance to change existing among peasants could be interpreted as a resistance to minor changes within a social system from which they have no expectations for essential betterment" (Huizer 1972:53). Furthermore:

We can now ask how the peasants living under these circumstances would have reacted if the visitors from the development agencies had come to help them fight against the repressive system instead of to offer minor improvement schemes which would actually emphasize rather than relieve the state of frustration in which the peasants live (Huizer 1970:305).

For millenia peasants have been victims of social, economic and political injustice and few "benefits" have accrued in their favor. Witness one recent example of the Green Revolution of the late 1960's and early 1970's which, by providing improved seed, fertilizer and agricultural technology, was supposed to put an end to hunger in the Third World. Instead, it widened the gap between rich and poor in the countryside since the capital outlay necessary for technological revolution was available only to large landowners and prosperous peasants. The rural poor, unable to compete financially, were progressively forced to sell or rent their tiny parcels of land and become wage laborers.

It may be said, then, that the maintenance of strong defenses against outside threats functions to equalize life's chances and risks among community members (Wolf 1957:12) or, to put it more accurately, to share poverty in a more or less egalitarian fashion (Huizer 1970:31). Wolf (1957:12) notes that, "The life risks of a peasantry are raised by any threat to its basic sources of livelihood, the land, and to the produce which is raised on that land". Given that the history of Mexico has centered around the struggle for land, Huizer (1972:51) rightly points out that, "Traditionalism is thus related to the overall social structure in the country as a form of protection against the dangers of pauperization". In addition, the maintenance of traditional forms of social organization acts as a defense against loss of dignity and social status among members of a particular society or class.

In Huaquechula, one of the most outstanding manifestations of traditionalism is the strong adherence to Catholicism, both at the formal level, since the community has a resident priest, and at the popular level. On various occasions, people told me that Huaquechula may lack water, industry or a highway but that it is a "village of God". I will elaborate on the particular reasons for such beliefs in Chapter 5, but for the moment I must point out that while Kearney (1984) offers a realistic description of how Catholicism functions in Mexico (i.e. present-oriented and

hierarchically organized in order to reproduce social relations between men), I cannot agree with his conclusions with respect to the community that I studied: 1) that "Mexican peasants are too realistically pessimistic to put much faith in a promise of an afterlife of leisure, milk, and honey" (Kearney, p. 195); and 2) that "For the most part [saints] are interested in respect, deference, and fiestas given in their honor. Nothing makes a saint happier than to have money spent for its glory. And a happy saint is a good patrón" (Kearney, p. 201). My research gave little indication that Huaquechultecos treat religion in such a frivolous manner or that they simply play lip service to Catholic doctrine while all the time knowing that they are really only being deceived. They are a "simple" people only in the sense that any layman is who cannot understand or explain such theological mysteries as the Holy Trinity, for example. I, personally, cannot. I accept, as do Huaquechultecos. I do not deny Kearney's realization that religion can be used as an instrument of repression (recall Marx's statement (1978:54) that religion is the opium of the people). What I would question, however, is the attitude of Kearney and others who interpret the world view of certain oppressed peoples and conclude that they are ignorant or child-like, give no thought to the future, and are ready to propitiate any authority figure in order to gain favors. Before trying to interpret the world view of others, Fernandez's warning (1985:756) regarding our own biases should be kept in mind:

There is the risk that these grand universal theories are mainly lodged in our own world view and our own significant discourse and are imposed upon the other. One consequence of the consciousness raising that Kearney is about should be the awareness of the tremendous capacity that contemporary politics and economics has given to us Euro-Americans to impose our thinking upon others.

Lack of education and political and economic power as well as ideological subordination leave certain people little recourse but to turn to God. A slightly different approach to the subtle dynamics of ideological domination, and one which I prefer to use, is offered by Lenin (1943:658):

Religion is one of the forms of spiritual oppression that everywhere weighs on the masses of the people, who are crushed by perpetual toil for the benefit of others, and by want and isolation. The impotence of the exploited classes in the struggle against the exploiters engenders faith in a better life beyond the grave just as inevitably as the impotence of the savage in his struggle against nature engenders faith in gods, devils, miracles and so forth. To him who toils and suffers want all his life religion teaches humility and patience on earth, consoling him with the hope of reward in heaven. And to those who live on the labor of others religion teaches charity on earth, offering them a very cheap justification for their whole existence as exploiters and selling them at a suitable price tickets for admission to heavenly bliss.

Chapter III
THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

3.1 INFRASTRUCTURE

For the purpose of this thesis, I find the most productive approach to be one termed the "new economic anthropology" (Clammer 1978). This may be described as the principles of Marxist theory applied to practical field research in an effort to explain the dynamic process of socioeconomic formation especially in underdeveloped countries. Before turning to specifics, I would like to outline some definitions of terms as I understand and will apply them to the subject of preservation of tradition in Huaquechula.

To elaborate first upon Marx's statement earlier (p. 4) regarding the relationship between economic base and superstructure, it may be further said that:

We understand by 'mode of production' an integrated complex of social productive forces and relationships linked to a determinate type of ownership of the means of production. From among the ensemble of relations of production, we consider those linked to the ownership of the means of production to be the essential relations, since they determine the forms of canalization of the economic surplus and the effective degree of the capacity of the productive forces for expansion (Laclau 1971:33).

According to O'Laughlin (1979:351), "Analysis of a mode of production must be movement from abstract general determinations to observation and conception at the level of the concrete and then back to the theoretical articulation of general and specific categories".

A mode of production, however, must not be confused with an economic system which

designates the mutual relations between the different sectors of the economy, or between different productive units, whether on a regional, national or world scale...An economic system can include, as constitutive elements, different modes of production--provided always that we can define it as a whole, that is, by proceeding from the element or law of motion that establishes the unity of its different manifestations (Laclau 1971:33).

Particular societies, then, "should be analyzed as social formations --relational systems composed of superstructure and a determinate economic base which may itself be a complex articulation of more than a single mode of production" (O'Laughlin 1979:350). It is not within the scope of this thesis to enter into a debate over the complex concept of articulation. Essentially, I understand articulation to mean a dynamic relationship between two or more modes of production within a social formation. In this relationship, the dominant mode subjects other modes to the needs and logic of its own functioning, not necessarily by destroying them, but by reconstituting and subordinating them to it.

O'Laughlin (1979:349-350) indicates that, in the dialectical relationship between forces and relations of production within a social formation, contradictions may develop. However:

The system reproduces itself, despite these contradictions, through the mediation of superstructure--juridico-political and ideological relations that suppress, displace, or misrepresent basic conflicts. These relations may themselves be contradictory, and certainly they do not strain toward any necessary functional integration or consistency. Nor do mediating structures annul contradictions; they merely permit their reproduction often in more antagonistic forms.

This concept of reproduction--the reproduction of labor, of the means of production and of the relations of production--links base to superstructure in a social formation.

A problem arose among Mexican Marxist anthropologists in which the understanding of a mode of production and of situating the peasantry within the larger social formation of Mexico has been a source of debate since the early 1970's. Roger Bartra (1974), for example, conceived of a peasant mode of production which he termed a "simple mercantile economy" characterized by the following traits (from Bartra 1974:72-79, my translation):

1. Peasant units of production are based on the use of family, not salaried, labor.
2. Production is mainly for the market.
3. Profit and variable capital are united.

4. The capitalist market, not the simple mercantile economy, fixes the prices of products.
5. The simple mercantile sector exhibits a process of "decampesinization" or decomposition manifested in the polarization of social groups of agriculturalists.⁸
6. Simple mercantile productive units include middle and rich peasants.

The persistence of non-capitalist forms of socio-economic organization was seen as necessary to Mexican capitalism which Bartra considered to be dependent on the world capitalist system and therefore incomplete in realizing its transformation.⁹ Essentially, Bartra assumed that:

⁸ Although Lenin (1966:66) spoke of peasants as a class, Marx (1978:608) commented with regards to the peasants of 19th century France that:

Insofar as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile contrast to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no unity, no national union and no political organization, they do not form a class.

⁹ I would tend to agree with Laclau's hypothesis (1971:36) that

what seems to be the key to a sustained process of accumulation is the expansion, in any sector of the system, of productive units in which either low technology or super-exploitation of labour makes it possible to counteract the depressive effect on the rate of profit of the increasing

[Mexico] was in effect stalled at a transitional stage, in which indigenous capitalists were not capable of completing the destruction of earlier forms of socioeconomic organization in the countryside, and in which, furthermore, the destruction of the latter would be highly prejudicial to the interests of capital formation in a dependent setting (Hewitt de Alcántara 1984:134).

The points of articulation between the simple mercantile economy and a capitalist mode of production occurs in two realms: in the market (via the mode of circulation) and more importantly in subsistence organization (via the mode of production itself) which Bartra concluded was an increasingly cumbersome strategy for survival. Using Marx's theory of value, Bartra argued that, since peasant labor is largely unremunerated and cannot produce more without expending more effort, then the simple mercantile economy is inefficient and its extinction is ensured due to its inability to compete with capitalist agricultural endeavors. The persistence of a pre-capitalist mode of production benefits capitalism, though, in that the peasantry enters into the process of exchange for subsistence needs that it cannot itself produce while capitalist buyers extract raw materials for profit. Exploitation occurs when peasant producers receive less for their goods than the average price for the agricultural sector as a whole due mainly to manipulation by commercial intermediaries. The interaction of the peasantry with capitalist classes, therefore, is

organic composition of capital in the dynamic or advanced industries.

basically one of exclusion which can only be remedied by the dissolution of the simple mercantile economy and the absorption of the peasantry into the capitalist mode as a proletariat where the potential for class consciousness is greater than in a rural setting (Bartra 1974:172).

In the late 1970's a consensus developed among Mexican anthropologists that Bartra's model of articulation between a simple mercantile economy and capitalism was too confining--that classes, not modes of production, enter into relations of domination and subordination (Hewitt de Alcántara, p. 144). The integration of the peasantry into the capitalist mode of production, then, must be greater than that implied by conceiving of a separate mode of production altogether. This led to the conception of a single socio-economic formation in which the capitalist mode predominates and with which other non-capitalist forms of production articulate. Classes were subsequently redefined to include the appropriation of surplus labor in addition to the relation to the means of production. Bartra's class of inefficient producers in this way became a reservoir of cheap labor for the accumulation of capitalist profits (Armando Bartra 1979). In addition, cultural ecologists such as Palerm (1980) have argued that, since peasant households rely on a combination of self-provisioning, the sale of goods on the market and wage labor to obtain a minimum income, they can withstand exploitation more easily

than small capitalist entrepreneurs or the rural proletariat. Capitalists take advantage of the diffuse socio-economic power base of the peasantry by "buying cheap", failing to remunerate direct producers, "selling dear" and charging high interest rates (Hewitt de Alcántara 1984:152). The complete dissolution of the peasantry was thus improbable due to the resiliency of peasant socio-economic organization and the need of the capitalist sector for both a source of cheap labor and for the preservation of future exploitation. Circulation Marxists,¹⁰ then, by removing peasant producers from the limiting category of a mode of production and placing them instead into a semi-proletariat class, could now deal directly with the notion of class struggle in protecting direct producers from extinction.

Paré, through her research in Michoacán, Puebla and the Mezquital Valley where mainly commercial crops such as sugar cane and coffee are cultivated, discovered that peasant producers, dependent upon credit from large-scale buyers, often received extremely limited profits for their efforts. They were, in effect, salaried through credit. Paré concluded that:

Ostensible investment in peasant agriculture was simply a way in which capital increased the likelihood of appropriating surplus value through more progressive and effective forms of

¹⁰ Mexican Marxist anthropologists who put primary emphasis on the mode of circulation of goods and the importance of the market rather than on the mode of production.

exploitation of its landed rural labor force, without granting the latter any further control over the productive process (Hewitt de Alcántara, p. 154).

Armando Bartra (1979:20-21) emphasized the role of credit in integrating the peasantry into the capitalist mode of production and came to the conclusion that peasants as a class are not so much inefficient as they are simply exploited. Even though the state has an interest in the survival of peasant producers, capitalist expansion knows no bounds. Hence the history of Mexico as one of constant struggle for land in which the peasantry sought, often through violent means, to preserve their access to land. Their contribution to the challenge against capitalist domination is as important as the struggle of the proletariat against capitalist exploitation.

It is interesting to note on the basis of this debate that little attention has been paid to the phenomenon of the unequal processes of development between different regions of Mexico. As Cockcroft (1983:190) points out:

Ten states, most of them in southern and central Mexico, have 80 percent of the rural unemployment and account for most of the out-migration. The central-south region (Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Puebla, Queretaro, San Luis Potosi, and Tlaxcala) accounts for 60 percent of the minifundios (tiny land parcels), which cultivate mainly corn. In the north-west, on the other hand, large-scale capitalist agriculture is firmly entrenched and a 'permanent' rural proletariat exists (supplemented by seasonal migrant labor).

Even within one small region, as in the Valley of Atlixco where my research took place (see Map 3), one notes

discrepancies in the size of land-holdings and cultigens produced. A brief survey undertaken by Popp, entitled "El cambio del paisaje cultural en el Valle de Atlixco" (1978), reveals that until the land reforms of 1930, six families of hacendados (large landowners) owned the majority of the valley's total hectares. Not surprisingly,

Through their political influence or their financial capability, some large landowners were able to avoid or win time in the planned destruction of their lands (Popp, p. 73, my translation).

Then, as now, the valley can be separated into two zones--irrigated and rain-fed. Popp (p. 73) attributes this to topographical factors yet comments, without drawing any conclusions, that until 1930 only the hacendados had access to water sources and that after the land reforms some ejidos also had water at their disposal. No mention is made of the various communities that do not have access to water, neither then nor today. In any case, both irrigated and rain-fed lands supply produce for major centers such as Mexico City, the irrigated lands providing a base for the intensive cultivation of alfalfa (with a modern milk-producing industry) and avocados. Although many small landholders have followed the example of hacendados in producing cash crops such as alfalfa, avocados and flowers, Popp (p. 74) notes that the peasantry will never attain the economic success of the first innovators.

Given, then, the differences that exist between various regions of Mexico (see also Edelman's study, "Agricultural Modernization in Smallholding Areas of Mexico: A Case Study in the Sierra Norte of Puebla", 1980), it may be possible to incorporate both the concept of the articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production with the concept of the peasantry as a semi-proletariat. The value of doing this will depend on the area in which research takes place. While the former may be too rigid a concept, the latter is too general. The Mexican peasantry is too integrated into the capitalist mode to be viewed as an isolate, but not all are involved to the extent that they could be considered a semi-proletariat except in the sense that they are a potential reserve labor force. Huaquechula is only one example of a community of small landholders that still exhibits a low degree of wage-laborers, at least in comparison with nearby ranchos such as Santiago Tetla from whence daily, truckloads of men, women and adolescents are transported to harvest flowers, tomatoes and onions in the Champusco area. As Cockcroft (1983:186) points out:

Because social classes are not static entities but dynamic, evolving relationships, always in the process of forming, combining, and reproducing the conditions of their existence, a concrete and complete picture of classes at a specific moment is impossible.

Thus, the concept of a "peasant" mode of production (or a "simple mercantile economy") articulated with a capitalist one is perhaps applicable for particular areas of Mexico

that have not yet been exposed to a high degree of wage-labor as a means of subsistence. This is provided that one does not delimit the peasant mode as a closed system. Nor is the idea of a semi-proletariat always wrong, either. Before the Conquest, a class of small producers existed and it was beneficial to the Spaniards to retain, in a modified form, these relations of production. Under an advanced stage of capitalism, however, these relations are no longer viable in many parts of Mexico; hence the development of a rural proletariat or semi-proletariat. What one witnesses today are stages of transition from a class of small producers to a full proletariat with the future of the Mexican peasantry under capitalism uncertain.

3.2 SUPERSTRUCTURE

Having discussed Mexico's rural class structure, I turn now to the role of the superstructure, in particular to ideology and its role in maintaining and protecting unequal relations of production in the countryside. I base my theoretical argument on the work of one of the leading scholars of ideology, Louis Althusser, whose ideas may clarify the problem of explaining preservation of tradition in Huaquechula.

Althusser (1971) draws upon Marx's structure of society as being composed of the infrastructure or economic base and the superstructure which may be separated into the politico-

legal (law and the state) and ideology (religion, ethics, legal and political systems, etc.). Althusser (p. 130) suggests that, although the economic base is determinant in the last instance, "(1) there is a 'relative autonomy' of the superstructure with respect to the base; [and that] (2) there is a 'reciprocal action' of the superstructure on the base". Althusser also elaborates on the Marxist distinction between state power and state apparatus by dividing the state apparatus into two categories: repressive and ideological. The repressive state apparatus (army, police, courts, prisons, etc.) functions primarily by violence, whereas the ideological state apparatus (religion, education, media, family, trade unions, etc.) functions much more subtly through concealed or symbolic sanctions.

In order for the continued existence of a dominant mode of production in a social formation, the dominant mode must reproduce both its productive forces and the existing relations of production. Under capitalism, the reproduction of labor power, one element of the productive forces, is attained through material means, i.e. wages, but also through the reproduction of a diversely-skilled labor force by way of various ideological state apparatuses. This is due to the fact that

the reproduction of labor power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order...[It] is in the forms and under the forms of ideological subjection that provision is made for the reproduction of the skills of labor power (Althusser, pp. 127, 128).

Althusser does not deny the importance of the repressive state apparatus in securing the reproduction of relations of production by direct force (or threat of force), but it is the ideological state apparatuses "which largely secure the reproduction...of the relations of production, behind a 'shield' provided by the repressive State apparatus" (Althusser, p. 142). How, then, is this done?

Althusser (p. 149) refers to the early works of Marx when he defines ideology as "the system of ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group". From this, he posits two theses concerning the structure and function of ideology (Althusser, pp. 152-159):

1. Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence, that is, ideology represents not the existing relations of production but rather the imaginary relationship of individuals to the relations of production.
2. Ideology has a material existence, that is, an ideology always exists in a material apparatus and in its material practice(s). Thus, given any individual,

his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatuses from which derive the ideas of that subject (Althusser, p. 158).

To Althusser, the decisive central term on which everything else depends is the individual or the "subject", for it is the subject who is interpellated or addressed by ideology and who responds in recognition to it. Through the process of interpellation, ideology simultaneously recruits subjects from among individuals.

This rather complex argument that Althusser presents may best be illustrated by turning directly to the more concrete example he offers concerning Christian religious ideology. It is addressed by the Scripture to individuals in order to transform them into subjects, to elicit their response of recognition that it is indeed they who are being addressed. In order for this response to occur, however, there must exist the absolute condition of a unique or central "other" Subject, i.e. God, in whose Name religion interpellates all subjects. The subject may then recognize himself as the reflection, the mirror-image, of God (since God created man in His image as well as endowed him with the gift of free choice of believing in Him or not). In fact, God "made" Himself into a man, Jesus Christ, to give physical proof that if His subjects truly believe, they, too, will return to the Kingdom of God on Judgement Day. Thus, the interpellated subject, by contemplating himself in God's image (Jesus Christ), is given the guarantee that "God will recognize His own", i.e. those who have recognized God and who have recognized themselves in Him shall be saved. To

summarize, then, we have a four-fold system of interpellation by Christian religious ideology (Althusser, pp. 168-169):

1. The interpellation of individuals as subjects.
2. Their subjection to the Subject, i.e. to God.
3. The mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subjects' recognition of each other, and the subject's recognition of himself as subject.
4. The absolute guarantee that everything really is so, and that on condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be all right: "Amen--So be it".

In this way, conscientious subjects (who are actually recruited by ideology even before birth) "work" by themselves, that is, they do not usually provoke intervention by the repressive state apparatus. Through a purely conceptual device, ideology establishes in the subject a proper attitude (toward God, duty, justice or law), leading him to believe that

every 'subject' endowed with a 'consciousness' and believing in the 'ideas' that his 'consciousness' inspires in him and freely accepts, must 'act according to his ideas', must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice. If he does not do so, 'that is wicked' (Althusser, p. 157).

Althusser admits that his hypotheses cannot be proven except through much thorough testing and analysis, but his

is one of the few efforts known to this writer to explain the intricate mechanisms of ideological subjugation.

"Amen--so be it":

This phrase proves that it has to be so if things are to be what they must be, and let us let the words slip: if the reproduction of the relations of production is to be assured, even in the processes of production and circulation, every day, in the 'consciousness' i.e. in the attitudes of the individual-subjects occupying the posts which the socio-technical division of labor assigns to them in production, exploitation, repression, ideologization, scientific practice, etc. (Althusser, p. 170).

Lambert (1977) basically supports Althusser's hypothesis of the function of Christian religious ideology in sustaining the unequal relations of production but he sees it furthermore as a source of alienation of the individual from himself and from nature. In his opinion,

Social and political expressions depend most directly on others in a system of thought that religion has inculcated in them and that the reformist clergy of today intend to adapt to new conditions (Lambert, p. 41, my translation).

The peasant, through his ties to the earth, is much more disposed than others to assimilate the "laws of nature" that Catholicism imposes upon him. But instead of encouraging a technically progressive attitude of man over nature, Catholicism accents the element of fate in misfortunes and successes. All attention is directed toward the Almighty whose Name one must invoke, for example, to bless seeds for planting (as if, as Lambert (p. 41, my translation) notes, blessed water could replace agricultural know-how).

Emphasis is placed on resignation to the conditions of life and to politico-economic oppression: Love thy neighbor as thyself which may be interpreted as, support your miseries and give thanks to your oppressors since there always have been and always will be rich and poor. The "natural" order imposes respect towards those who were created to command: the clergy, the aristocrats, the bourgeoisie. In effect, the socio-economic hierarchy of Mexico is reflected in the very symbolic structure of the church. It is not "of this world"; law descends from on high and the church determines that which is permitted or prohibited, that which one must believe and do in order to gain salvation. Marx (1978:54) once stated that:

Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

In the eyes of Catholicism, however, if an individual is not happy in this world, he will surely find happiness in another. Thus, before attempting to transform society, one must first prepare oneself for the hereafter. Through the inculcation of Christian religious ideology in the mind of the peasant, the reproduction of the relations of production are maintained. As Althusser would put it: the individual acting according to his ideas puts his ideas into practice and therefore upholds the belief in the Word as all powerful.

Paré (1975) supplies concrete examples of ways in which the poor are directly exploited with regard to their belief in Christian religious ideology. As she explains:

It is known that...the Catholic religion, with its exaltation of the reign of the poor in the hereafter and resignation in this world, has contributed to preserving the status quo and to protecting relations of exploitation (Paré, p. 59).¹¹

In the Sierra Norte of Puebla where her research was conducted, Paré discovered numerous examples of religious fiestas of the indigenous people which require heavy expenditures for ritual goods such as food and alcohol, a fact which, in the last instance, benefits the merchants who supply those items. In one specific case, a conflict between the inhabitants of a barrio (suburb) of the city of Zacapoaxtla and authorities erupted over the relocation of a saint-figure who is the object of veneration and pilgrimage to a large number of indigenous people. Pressured by influential merchants, the authorities transferred the figure to the city proper thus obligating the devout to worship (and spend their money) in Zacapoaxtla rather than in one of its barrios.

¹¹ This situation has changed somewhat in other areas of Latin America with the advent of Liberation Theology, a revolutionary offshoot of formal Catholicism which works for and with the masses to produce major societal changes, but there was no evidence of this influence in Huaquechula.

This is only one of many examples which illustrate the fact that preservation of tradition is encouraged by bourgeois mercantile interests. Religious fiestas have been transformed into spectacles for the tourist market or into a pretext for fairs where alcohol (especially canned or bottled beer) is sold in prolific amounts. Besides benefitting a small but powerful class of merchants, these phenomena also ensure the continued poverty of peasants who do attempt to sponsor or at least attend the fiestas.

In Chapter 2, I pointed out some of the drawbacks of both Redfield's "rural-urban continuum" and Foster's "image of limited good" models in dealing with culture change or stability. Similarly, in this chapter, I have tried to emphasize that any generalizations about Mexico's rural class structure are difficult to make. With regard to the various approaches I have outlined, Cockcroft (1983:191) states that:

Simple formulae that emphasize 'de-peasantization' or proletarianization of the rural masses, on the one hand, or the preserverance of communal, folkloric, or other peasant traditions maintaining the peasantry as a single, coherent class, on the other, fail to allow for the shifting patterns of class transformation and intraclass stratification that accompanied the stepped-up tempo of agricultural capitalization [in Mexico] after 1940.

It is in this context that I recall O'Laughlin's statement (page 29 above) that the analysis of a mode of production must proceed from the general to the specific and back to a synthesis of general and specific categories. Having

briefly dealt with the social formation of Mexico (which I maintain for the purpose of this thesis is an articulation of a capitalist and a non-capitalist mode of production), I turn now to a more specific treatment of Huaquechula itself.

Chapter IV

HUAQUECHULA: PRESERVATION OF TRADITION

4.1 THE LAND

Huaquechula, whose name has been translated from Nahuatl to mean "place from where flew an eagle with beautiful plumage", is a primarily agrarian community of approximately 3,000 inhabitants. From the scant information available,¹² Huaquechula was apparently founded in the late 1400's by the Spaniards who brought together people from two nearby villages, one to the northwest, the other to the south. Until the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Huaquechula grew to be a fairly important center of commerce. Even though the town is presently the cabecera of the municipio, Huaquechultecos are aware of its rich past only through myths, legends and memories of those who lived during the revolution. Silent tribute to its prehispanic past lies buried in the countryside; all moneyed interests left after the revolution.

Today Huaquechula serves mainly as a supplier of agricultural produce for Atlixco, the nearest major market center, and for Puebla, the capital of the state. It is

¹² Topological and census data from Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Geografía e Informática (INEGI), Puebla.

situated in relatively low land (1600 meters above sea level) and the climate is classified as semi-hot subhumid with an average yearly temperature of 21.9 degrees centigrade and a total annual precipitation of 857.5 millimeters. Under these conditions and because of the lack of irrigation other than summer rains, agriculturalists can rely on at least one harvest per year of the major crops of maize, beans, sorghum, peanuts, tomatos (both red and green) and melons. Small plots of privately owned land are most common although some ejidos also exist. Few people are totally landless. Cultivation is primarily carried out by way of animal traction but several households do own tractors and will rent out their labor and service to those who can afford it. Fields are fertilized both naturally and chemically. Most of the land around Huaquechula is considered by INEGI to have greater productive potential than that at which it is presently worked but in most cases this would require a large cash investment in machinery and irrigation systems. As it is, Table 1 gives some indication of present productivity. In comparison, the area between Cacaloxuchil and Champusco, two towns to the west of the municipality (see Map 4) which utilize surface water irrigation techniques, exhibits the productivity of its major crops as shown in Table 2. Without doubt, Huaquechula would benefit from some sort of irrigation practices in order to increase crop yield¹³ but, since the regulation of

¹³ The higher average yield of red tomatos in Huaquechula

TABLE 1 PRODUCTIVITY OF MAJOR CROPS GROWN IN HUAQUECHULA
IN KILOGRAMS/HECTARE

CROP	AVERAGE YIELD (KILOS/HECTARE)
maize	2,533
sorghum	2,500
tomato (red)	24,000
tomato (green)	1,050
peanuts	1,267

TABLE 2 PRODUCTIVITY OF MAJOR CROPS GROWN
IN THE CACALOXUCHIL/CHAMPUSCO AREA
IN KILOGRAMS/HECTARE

CROP	AVERAGE YIELD (KILOS/HECTARE)
maize	12,000
tomato (red)	10,000
tomato (green)	4,000
cucumber	7,980

water whose source originates to the northwest is a complicated political issue, this has not yet occurred.

Other than agricultural crops, Huaquechula has little to offer in the way of natural resources. Although the area is classified as being forested, for example, its use is strictly domestic and not suited for the development of commerce or industry. Geological deposits of volcanic origin have limited use as road fill. The raising of cattle is a possibility again only with large cash outlays to develop cultivated pasture land through irrigation; to the northwest, where suitable natural forage is located, the hilly terrain inhibits livestock mobility.

An example (though not altogether representative) that may illustrate the typical economic practices of Huaquechultecos comes from the economic status of my informant's household. María and her husband, Juan, own a total of three hectares of land geographically separated into three small plots of approximately equal size. Since they have only two daughters (one who studies in Mexico City and another who is only nine), all aspects of agricultural work are carried out by themselves alone. Juan is responsible for the heavier tasks of preparing the fields

than in the Cacaloxuchil/Champusco area may be related to the fact that this crop suffers from too much water (irrigation plus temporal rains) and must be closely supervised so that it may be harvested before it putrifies on the vine. Lack of irrigation in Huaquechula may, in this case, be advantageous.

for cultivation, first cutting back the weeds with a machete then tilling with a team of two burros and a wooden plow. María later assists with planting, weeding and harvesting. The land is stoney, and dry from lack of water. Natural fertilizer is used since they also own two cows and two bull calves.

Their other alternative would be to hire peones (wage-laborers). Possibly from lack of finances they have not done so, but there is also another reason: Juan has established a work routine that compensates for the lack of assistance from family members. Obligations such as mending harnesses or selling sombreros and household goods out of their home are attended to in the morning. This results in his leaving for the fields around noon and often not returning until after dark. Hiring peones, then, is out of the question since they expect to work a nine-hour day from 8:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. If they are needed for only a few hours, they must be paid for a full day and if they are left unsupervised, apparently they will not do any work at all.

María and Juan must supplement any income they make from agriculture with other economic activities. As mentioned above, they also sell certain goods out of their home. These are bought on a small scale by Juan in Atlixco or Puebla. María and Juan rent space in the weekly market to set up a puesto and increase their sales. To a certain point, they are economically self-sufficient, relying on

their cows for milk which they also sell and on a varying number of chickens for eggs and meat. By far the majority of Huaquechultecos are in a similar situation since few can subsist on agriculture alone. A maize harvest, for example, seldom lasts half a year before more must be bought to meet daily consumption requirements.

4.2 THE PEOPLE

According to the 1980 census (the most recent available and on municipal level only), the population of the municipality of Huaquechula was 24,139. As of 1982, the municipality was reported to have 3,824 families.¹⁴ The majority (93%) are Catholic. Of the 772 people who speak an indigenous language, 637 speak Nahuatl; other languages spoken to a lesser degree are Totonaco (39), Mixteco (11), Chocho (4), Otomí (2), Zapoteco (1) and Tarasco (1). Twenty-four percent of the population over 15 years of age is illiterate but this fact is not surprising when one considers that 8% of children between 6 and 14 years of age do not attend school at all but work or help their families instead. Seventy-three percent of the population 10 years of age and over have no junior high or high school training and 78% of those who are 15 years old and over have no professional training.

¹⁴ "Households" as opposed to "families" was not given in the Almanaque de Puebla (1982).

Of the economically active population (12 years of age and older), almost 10% of the males and 4% of the females are totally unemployed. The majority (74%) of the employed are involved in agricultural endeavors, mainly farming (98%). All are classified as self-employed and receive no wages. The remaining 2% are wage-laborers, agricultural officials, operators of agricultural machinery or transporters of produce. Only a small minority (0.2%) of the total employed population of the municipality receive wages of 12,111 pesos¹⁵ or more annually.

Unfortunately, data concerning land tenure, e.g. size of holdings and ownership, were not available; hence the rather sparse documentation on my part of this crucial factor. Without this, the data presented in the government census appears somewhat incomplete for, as Cockcroft (1983:189) points out: "Census categories obscure class lines, conceal unemployment, and fail to capture the complexity of economic-survival strategies undertaken by working families, village communities or ejidos". Speaking of Mexico in general, Cockcroft (p.190) states that in rural areas, the average schooling amounts to 1.3 years, medical services are minimal, 62% of the people lack potable water, 80% of employed adults suffer from malnutrition and 75% of the work force receives well below the legal minimum wage.

¹⁵ In 1980, one American dollar was worth approximately 203 pesos. Thus, 99.8% of the total employed population of the municipality of Huaquechula received wages of less than sixty American dollars annually.

Regarding Huaquechula itself, the majority of households own small parcels of land which they either work themselves or with a small number of peones. Often they engage in other financial endeavors such as small-scale marketing of fruit and vegetables or meat; others have in-home businesses as bakers, tailors, shoe repairmen or barbers. The most conspicuously wealthy have established their businesses around the zocalo (town center): one family owns a pharmacy; a father and son team own the two largest grocery stores in Huaquechula; an older couple own a clothing store. Some household heads have worked in the United States for varying periods of time and often use their earnings to improve or entirely rebuild their homes rather than invest in a business. During the time of my research, it appeared that Huaquechula could only support a limited number of entrepreneurs since, although the town is the focal point of commerce for all nearby ranchos, Atlixco in turn supplies Huaquechula with all the goods it lacks.

State institutions include a governmental office of the presidency, a postal station, a health center, a food co-op and a technical high school. La presidencia, the post office and the co-op are staffed by Huaquechultecos while doctors and teachers usually come from outside the community. The health center is often busy, although the intern at the time once told me that some people still rely on home cures and do not trust "modern medicine".

Nonetheless, serious injuries do occur, and the health center is of great benefit to Huaquechula and surrounding ranchos. Some mistrust is present as, for example, when the co-op was accused of stockpiling maize and then selling it in a deteriorated quality. In addition, la técnica, as the high school is referred to, is somewhat of a problem in that it requires large amounts of water for the crops and livestock raised there and, as I have already mentioned, water is scarce in Huaquechula. All of these state institutions, however, seem to provide accepted services to the community.

A resident priest is responsible for both Huaquechula and surrounding ranchos that require special masses. The yearly cycle of holy days is strictly adhered to, some being accompanied by the elaborate fiestas that Huaquechula is known for. The majority of these celebrations are carried out for and by the people and, except for occasionally participating in religious processions, to my knowledge the priest had little to do with the festivities.

4.3 BELIEF AND RITUAL

Huaquechula is known regionally for its colorful and elaborate religious fiestas, the most important of which are Christmas, Easter, Day of the Holy Cross (May 3rd) and All Saints Day (Todos Santos), although various saints' days also call for masses and processions. National holidays go

virtually unnoticed. Villagers pride themselves in that their celebrations have remained highly traditional, i.e. Catholic. For the most part they are unsullied by more "modern" influences such as the mechanical rides, games and large quantities of alcohol that are brought into the rancho of Santiago Tetla for the day of its patron saint. On the contrary, vestiges of prehispanic ritual may still be detected in some of Huaquechula's Catholic celebrations. One example of this is that, on the Day of the Holy Cross, participants dance in the streets with baskets of flowers, tortillas and mole, bottles of liquor, and baked turkey and pig's heads on platters. Folklorists from Puebla who attended the fiesta were interested in trying to determine the exact origin of this tradition, since it was quite obviously not High Catholic. Another example is the importance of flowers in the fiesta of Todos Santos, not only in Huaquechula but throughout Mexico. The church does not encourage offerings of flowers to the dead yet the amount of flowers that adorn the ofrendas during this particular celebration imply that they may have a special pre-Catholic significance. This, along with a poem of indigenous origin that likens man's existence on earth to that of a flower, was actually the impetus for the title of this thesis.

Depending on the importance of the fiesta, there will be several or many individuals who accept responsibility for

its sponsorship. Usually it is the most affluent who assume religious cargos although two or more households may collaborate in joint sponsorship. In either case, general assistance, at least, is provided by friends, neighbors and relatives. Above all, Huaquechultecos are a pious people if not in spirit, then in action. All make an appearance at mass more or less frequently. Often, greater concern is shown for a child's religious training than for whether or not he attends school. Generally, the belief system and unspoken social sanctions still appear strong enough in Huaquechula to override many outside secular influences.

4.4 THE FIESTA OF TODOS SANTOS

The fiesta of Todos Santos, a prehispanic commemoration of the dead superimposed by Catholicism, is only one of many examples of religious syncretism in Mexico. In fact, the two traditions have become so thoroughly enmeshed that it is almost impossible to determine where one ends and the other begins.

November 1st and 2nd, known as Todos Santos and Fieles Difuntos respectively, are the official Catholic holidays. Todos los Santos, or All Saints' Day, is a feast-day to honor all the saints of God. Although its origins are uncertain, its importance has been explained as follows:

The feast of All Saints seems...to be in some sort greater than that of Easter or the Ascension. Our Lord is perfected in this mystery, because as our Head, he is only perfect and fulfilled when he is

united to all his members, the saints...it is glorious because it manifests exteriorly the hidden life of Jesus Christ (Olier, quoted in Attwater 1949:15).

Fieles Difuntos, or All Souls' Day, is a solemn commemoration of all the faithful departed,

in which the Church, their common Mother, after being careful to celebrate with due praise her children already rejoicing in Heaven on All Saints' Day, strives to help all those who still long in Purgatory by supplication to Christ, her Lord and Bridegroom, that they may quickly attain to the fellowship of the heavenly citizens (The Roman Martyrology, quoted in Attwater, p. 15).

Apparently the Catholic Church was hesitant to introduce a special day in which the deceased would be remembered due to the tenacity with which people retained their "pagan" rites for the dead. Even today, popular customs such as leaving food offerings for the deceased are still carried out alongside religious practices such as processions to the cemetery to leave candles and flowers on the graves of friends and relatives (New Catholic Encyclopedia 1967:319).

The Aztecs, of course, had their own notions about death. One was that it marked the end of man's existence forever. Another was that the deceased could go on to one of three possible abodes (Thompson 1941:49-50):

1. Warriors slain in battle or sacrifice and women who had died in childbirth went to the sun, Tonatiuh. After four years, males were converted into hummingbirds or butterflies and were free to return to earth. Females would roam about as goddesses who would cause fright or bodily harm to the living.

2. Victims of accidental death or of certain incurable diseases remained in an earthly paradise with the raingods or Tlalocs.
3. All others went to Mictlan, a place of suffering under the earth's surface. That there was no escape can be seen in part of the prayer addressed to a soul who had gone to this land of the dead:

For thou hast removed to the abode of the dead, to the place of descent, to the place of no outlets and no openings. For no more mayest thou make thy return, thy way back...(Sahagún 1952:40).

Although the Aztecs were known to have honored their dead at various times during the yearly round of ritual ceremonies, the closest resemblance to the Catholic rites of Todos Santos can be found in the Aztec month of Teotl eco which means "the gods arrive". The Aztec solar year consisted of 365 days--18 months of 20 days each plus 5 odd days of bad omen called Nemontemi--and Teotl eco, the twelfth month, corresponds to our September 21st to October 10th (see Table 3). On the fifteenth day of this month, fir branches were laid down in every temple and home in anticipation of the arrival of Tlamatzincatl, the youngest and strongest of all gods who was the first to return. Maize was offered to all the gods and on the third day of laying down fir branches, when Tlamatzincatl was to arrive, fish amaranth seed ground into dough was set out for him. In the night the elders partook of wine in his honor. On the

TABLE 3 MONTHLY CEREMONIES OF THE SOLAR YEAR

<i>Month</i>	<i>Literal meaning</i>	<i>Dates*</i>	<i>Most important deities worshipped</i>	<i>Primary religious themes</i>	<i>Sample of ritual activities</i>
1. Atl caualo	Ceasing of Water	Feb. 13- Mar. 4	Tlalouque, Chalchiuhtlicue	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Papers hung on poles, fasting for rain, tamales offered, dancing, children sacrificed
2. Tlacaxipehualiztli	Flaying of Men	Mar. 5- Mar. 24	Xipe Totec	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Dancing, vigils, feasting. Human sacrifices (including gladiatorial sacrifice with flaying, and child sacrifices), rewards presented to outstanding warriors
3. Toçoztontli	Little Vigil	Mar. 25- Apr. 13	Tlalouque, Centeotl, Chalchiuhtlicue, Chicomecoatl	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Planting rituals (in fields); flowers, snakes, and tamales offered; children's rituals and sacrifices
4. Ucy toçoztli	Great Vigil	Apr. 14- May 3	Centeotl, Chicomecoatl, Tlalouque, Quetzacoatl	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Fasting, offerings, mock battles between youths and maidens; seed maize blessed; children's rituals and sacrifices; deity impersonator sacrificed
5. Toxcatl	Our Drought	May 4- May 23	Tezcatlipoca, Huitzilopochtli	Celestial creativity— divine paternalism; war—sacrifice	Sacrifice of deity impersonators; dancing; feasting; incense, food and quail offered; children's rituals
6. Etzalcualiztli	Eating of <i>Etzalli</i> ^b	May 24- June 12	Tlaloc, Chalchiuhtlicue, Quetzacoatl	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Fasting for rain; etzalli offering and eating; offerings made to agricultural tools; deity impersonators sacrificed
7. Tecuilhuitontli	Little Feast Day of the Lords	June 13- July 2	Xochipilli, Huixtocihuastl	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Singing, dancing, human sacrifices, nobles feast commoners
8. Ucy tecuilhuitl	Great Feast Day of the Lords	July 3- July 22	Xilonen, Cihuacoatl	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Nobles feast commoners, singing and dancing of warriors and prostitutes, deity impersonators sacrificed
9. Tlaxochimaco	Offering of Flowers	July 23- Aug. 11	Huitzilopochtli, Tezcatlipoca, all gods in general	War—sacrifice; celestial creativity— divine paternalism	Flowers offered and idols decorated, singing, dancing, human sacrifices, honoring of dead
10. Xocotl uetzi	Fall of Xocotl	Aug. 12- Aug. 31	Xiuhtecutli, Xocotl, Yacatecutli (patron of the merchants)	Celestial creativity— divine paternalism	Fire sacrifice; impersonator of Yacatecutli sacrificed; ceremony of Xocotl pole: boys strive to climb pole and retrieve image; honoring of dead
11. Ochpaniztli	Sweeping of the Road	Sept. 1- Sept. 20	Teteoinnan-Toci, Centeotl, Chicomecoatl	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Harvest events: fasting, singing, dancing, offerings, feasting; deity impersonators sacrificed; mock battles; overall cleaning and repairing of houses, temples, and public structures; rewards presented to outstanding warriors
12. Teuileco	The God Arrives	Sept. 21- Oct. 10	Tezcatlipoca, Huitzilopochtli, Xiuhtecutli, Yacatecutli, all gods in general	Celestial creativity— divine paternalism; war—sacrifice	Celebration of the return of the gods (including singing, dancing, offerings, feasting); fire sacrifices
13. Tepcuilhuil	Mountain Feast Day	Oct. 11- Oct. 30	Tlalouque, Xochiquetzal, pulque gods	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Rain and pulque deities venerated with offerings and human sacrifices; rituals on hilltops for Tlalouque
14. Quechollli	Precious Feather	Oct. 31- Nov. 19	Mixcoatl-Camaxtli	War—sacrifice	Fashioning of hunting gear; hunting of animals; rewards and feasting for successful hunters; deity impersonators sacrificed
15. Panquetzaliztli	Raising of Banners	Nov. 20- Dec. 9	Huitzilopochtli, Tezcatlipoca	War—sacrifice; celestial creativity— divine paternalism	Large-scale fasting, dancing of warriors and prostitutes, processions, large-scale human sacrifices, feasting
16. Atemoztli	The Falling of Water	Dec. 10- Dec. 29	Tlalouque	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Fasting, fashioning of Tlalouque images, offerings to Tlalouque, children sacrificed
17. Tititl	Stretching	Dec. 30- Jan. 18	Cihuacoatl, all gods in general	Rain—moisture— agricultural fertility	Procession, deity impersonator sacrificed, women ritually harassed
18. Izcalli	Growth, Rebirth	Jan. 19- Feb. 7	Xiuhtecutli	Celestial creativity— divine paternalism	Feasting, fashioning of deity images, offerings, children raised by neck to ensure their growth, new fire ignited
Nemontemi	Barren or Useless Days	Feb. 8- Feb. 12	—	—	Evil days, fasting, penance, most usual behavior curbed (quarreling held to be particularly bad at this time)

Compiled from Sahagún 1950-1969, book 2; Durán 1971; Nicholson 1971: table 4.1^a

From Frances F. Berdan, The Aztecs of Central Mexico: An Imperial Society (1982).

fourth day, all branches were discarded. At midnight on the fifth day, the last day of the month, the priests prepared a flat circular ball of maize dough which was placed upon a mat and watched all night by the aged priests for the sure sign that the gods had arrived: a "footprint" in the dough where it had cracked from drying out. When the priests announced the return of the gods, the people were jubilant and all laid offerings of dough at the feet of their idols. Again the elders would partake of wine in their honor. The last to arrive, one day later, were the very oldest gods of the merchant class, Yacatecutli and Zuihtecutli. After this, a series of ritual dances and casting of sacrificial victims onto an altar of fire was carried out (Sahagún 1951:118-120).

During the thirteenth month of Tepeilhuitl which corresponds to our October 11th to 30th, ceremonies were held in honor of the high mountains and those who had accidentally died by drowning or by being struck by lightning. Small dough images were made for each accidentado which later were shaped into human figures adorned with banners and headdresses. At sunrise the images were placed in the houses of the deceased and offerings of tamales, chile sauce, meat and incense were set before them (Sahagún, pp. 121-123).

One can locate numerous references to Aztec ceremonies in other months, parts of which may have been syncretized with

Catholicism. The ever-present incense and candles used in Catholic ritual, for example, are said to represent

the consuming zeal of the Christian, the good odour of virtue and the going-up of prayer and good works to God (Attwater 1949:250)

[and as] the incense which sent up its cloud of fragrance was a symbol of prayer, so the candle consuming itself was a type of sacrifice (Attwater, p. 69).

These surely held similar meanings to the Aztecs who offered copal and beeswax to the Tlalocs so that new maize crops might be protected.

Yet nowhere in the literature could I find reference to souls returning to earth in either Catholic or Aztec beliefs. In fact, every indication is that they did not. One demonstration of this from my field research is that in Huaquechula the church neither condemns nor condones the non-Catholic aspects of Todos Santos yet on at least two occasions we were reminded by the priest that, while the festivities were very pretty, they are remnants of the pagan past. The dead are with Christ and while they may be remembered with a candle or a prayer, Christian faith is best exhibited by being hospitable to the many visitors who would come during the week of the fiesta. There is evidence, however, that the flowers offered to the Aztec war god, Huitzilopochtli, symbolized the souls of the dead (Séjourné 1957:160-161). It is very possible that the emphasis placed on flowers in the present-day celebration of Todos Santos may have somehow been incorporated into the

belief system of common people in Aztec society and has remained in the Catholic ceremony as one of its "pagan" attributes, especially since an offering of flowers to the dead is apparently discouraged by the church which prefers payment for masses for the dead instead (Attwater 1949:196). I propose the above explanation of the importance of flowers at a "popular" level as a result of Dávila's investigation (1971:400) of the origin of compadrazgo (ritual kin relations), his conclusions of which may be applied to religious beliefs as well:

An examination of the material on parallels and survivals from pre-Conquest cultures does not provide satisfactory explanations for the differences in forms of compadrazgo...the data which are available are inadequate; it is drawn mostly from a description of ceremonies in centers of high cultures and does not provide much information on local variation, and there is some question of its accuracy.

Madsen (1967) suggests that the imposition of Catholicism was more complete and relatively easier in Mexico than in other areas since the Spaniards essentially "decapitated" the Aztec value system of war and human sacrifice. However, the persistence of "pagan" customs and beliefs is accounted for by the fact that "the conquerers deliberately transmitted only those essentials of their culture deemed desirable for export to the New World" (Madsen, p. 369). The similarities between the timing and rituals of Nahuatl ceremonies for the dead and the Catholic sequence of sacred days associated with the fiesta of Todos Santos may be sheer coincidence, but they exist nonetheless: the 28th of

October is the day of San Simón, patron saint of los accidentados; on the 31st, the souls of children are thought to come back which is reminiscent of the return of the youngest and most agile god, Tlamatzincatl; on the 1st of November, the souls of adults who have died within the past year (and to whom the major ofrendas are dedicated) arrive; and lastly, on the 2nd, all others are believed to return.

I have touched upon the subject of religious syncretism here not so much to determine exactly which traits of the fiesta of Todos Santos are prehispanic and which are Catholic as to emphasize the importance of both in this particular celebration. The possible origin of any one element (or combination thereof) is actually secondary to the fact that religious beliefs guide and structure the ritual behavior of Huaquechultecos especially during this two-week long fiesta. These beliefs have both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, they function as an integrating mechanism by providing a sense of communal identity, solidarity and pride in which the whole town participates. On the other hand, as will be elaborated upon in Chapter 5, this solidarity is encouraged and even taken advantage of by both church and state in that each serves to benefit in a monetary sense by the people's adherence to tradition and the extravagant expenditures needed to sustain it.

4.4.1 Crafts

Three main crafts are produced for Todos Santos: pottery, sugar figures and taffeta flower arrangements. All are seasonal occupations carried out by both males and females, for production is not restricted by gender. Several other crafts such as the making of comales (large clay platter on which tortillas are cooked) and weaving in palm are year-round activities dictated by household or ritual demand, but are not covered in this section.

Foster (1965:43) states that:

In examining the voluminous ethnographical literature describing the manufacture of pottery, one notes with surprise how little attention has been paid to the social, cultural, and economic settings in which the work is done. Most descriptions deal with techniques and processes of manufacture, and with design elements. But beyond telling which sex makes pots, most accounts reveal little about such things as the status of the potter in his or her society...how potters look upon their work artistically and economically, standards of workmanship and the range of variation within a community, and above all, about the processes that contribute to stability in a tradition, which make for change, and which may be involved in the dying-out of a style.

In this section, I hope to deal adequately with these aspects not only with reference to Huaquechula's potters, but to other craftspeople as well. Graburn (1976:13) suggests that the continued production of traditional art is dependent upon other factors besides or in addition to market demand. Such things as the availability of traditional raw materials, time to work, the lack of

competing attractions, knowledge of the skills and aesthetics of the arts, rewards and prestige from peer-group members, the role of the items in supporting the belief systems and ritual or gift-exchange systems together determine the survival or collapse of art and craft production. Regarding sugar figures (alfeniques) and taffeta flowers (ramos), it appears that there are enough young people, particularly girls, interested enough to continue producing these "clean" crafts. Since few females are employed outside the home, they are best-suited to engage in small-scale seasonal craft production so as to contribute in their own way to the household income. Potters, however, may be a dying breed since few young people care for this heavy and "dirty" way of earning a living. Many will resort to study or wage-labor outside of Huaquechula especially if inheritance of land is a problem. Thus, they have no need nor inclination to remain in their village, trying to make ends meet in a strictly seasonal vocation. It seems, too, that it is not so much the lack of Huaquechultecan ritual pottery at the present time that indicates its obsolescence as much as it is that the pottery is simply being replaced by factory-produced candeleros (candle holders) and sahumarios (censers) of glass and metal as can be seen in Photos 13 to 19.

4.4.1.1 Alfarería (Pottery)

The good potter:
 he takes great pains with his work;
 he teaches the clay to lie;
 he converses with his heart;
 he makes things live, he creates them;
 he knows all...;
 he trains his hands to be
 skillful.¹⁶

One of the most important additions to the ofrendas are the clay candeleros and sahumarios that are made by seven or eight households only for Todos Santos (see Photos 1 and 2). In one of the few references made to Huaquechula, it is said that those who do work in clay are

female potters who produce mold-made animals and figures for the festivals of Todos Santos and Christmas, of clay fired once and decorated with analines for exclusively local sales, a fact which indicates that pottery-making here will not last very long (Espejel 1975:65, my translation).

During the period of my research, I found this statement to be not entirely accurate. Men as well as women produce pottery and various factors seem to be involved in stylistic changes and distribution, though perhaps not to the extent that the future of pottery production in Huaquechula will be any different than Espejel suggests.

Certain factors are common to all Huaquechula's potters: where the clay comes from; production techniques; and style of decoration (see Appendix A for details of pottery-making). The differences lie in the volume of production,

¹⁶ From "Nahuatl Texts of the Indian Informants of Sahagún", quoted in Miguel León-Portilla, Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind (1963).

marketing procedures and in fundamental attitudes towards potting. Only one household produces en masse and sells on a regional, rather than just local, level. All others work on a smaller scale, selling mainly in Huaquechula's weekly market, in la plaza grande during Todos Santos or out of their homes. Potters are usually middle-aged or older and, while all agree that working in clay is a strenuous occupation that few young people want to take up, the older generation tends to approach the production of pottery for Todos Santos more as a ritual obligation than as a money-making endeavor. These similarities and differences are illustrated below in the following three case studies.

Case Study 1

Don José is a seventy-year old bachelor. He has been working in clay since he was a child and is apparently fairly well-known as a potter, having taken orders from Yucatán, Mexico City and even New York. He insists on cash in advance as security and paints mainly with natural colors in accordance with his clients' wishes. When I first began interviewing Don José in April, he had just taken an order from Yucatán for 180 to 200 candeleros for Todos Santos.

A younger man and compadre of Don José brings him small amounts of clay to work with, and allows him to use his brick kiln in which he fires comales since Don José does not own one. Painting is a joint effort between the two.

Don José was perhaps the most skilled potter I met in Huaquechula, his technique knowledgeable and sure, probably due to his years of experience. For example, all the seams of his candeleros both inside and out were smoothed over, rendering the figures stronger and more pleasing to the eye. Unfortunately, Don José's health was failing and he could no longer work as he once had, especially in clay, which is considered by many including potters themselves to be extremely heavy labor. Only once did I actually see Don José make candeleros. Every other time he would be occupied with such lighter tasks as making bread or candied fruit to sell at a nearby village, caretaking the church, or making alfeniques to sell in Atlixco. Helping his nephews to plant his small parcel of land also occupied much of his time. More than once he expressed regret over the fact that no young people wanted to learn to work in clay. By the time I left Huaquechula, Don José had only succeeded in making some fifteen candeleros. He had given up hope of meeting the November deadline of two hundred.

Case Study 2

Don Mario, a young man in his early thirties, and his sixty-five year old mother, Doña Lucía, are landless. Besides selling fruit and vegetables on a relatively large scale, they are the most prolific potters in Huaquechula. Working steadily from May until October, they can produce 100 candeleros, 100 sahumarios and 200 hand-built muñequitos

or doll figures-cum-candleholders (see Photo 3). None of these are sold to any great extent in Huaquechula as much as they are taken en masse by Don Mario to other towns in the region where they are in high demand.

Doña Lucía began working in clay fifty years ago when she made comales. Because of the strenuous nature of the work she and her son, who she taught at an early age, now only make figures for Todos Santos. Relatives from Santo Domingo to the south bring them their clay in bulk (80 kilograms or more at a time), the price of which has more than doubled in two years from 200 to 500 pesos. Work is divided equally between the two according to their ability and preference. Don Mario will carry out heavier tasks such as mixing the clay, but construction of the forms from May until late July or early August is a joint effort. Painting, which takes about a month and a half, is begun by Doña Lucía who applies the flowers. Although she is blind in one eye she still has the steady hand needed for this time-consuming work. She will also gesso the figures while Don Mario does all the fine finishing touches with colors. This year they were experimenting with natural dyes since previously they had only used oil-based colors.

It is claimed that Don Mario is the one behind the creative innovations so evident in their work and he often comes up with new forms and styles. Muñequitos mounted on horseback are made only by this household. Silver sparkles

(see previous Photo 1) added as a final decoration are also unique in Huaquechula. Occasionally one will see a candelero adorned with a saint or a virgin figure above which is a tiny clay flag of Mexico. They also make several candeleros at least two feet in height, using wires to attach additional small clay flowers and cherubs.

Perhaps because Doña Lucía and her son are involved in comparatively large-scale production, they are cognizant of the financial pitfalls of pottery-making. They are aware of the seasonality of their work and that, since the monetary rewards are small, it takes dedication to work in clay. The price of raw materials is also rising but Don Mario commented that people will continue potting because even as the cost of raw materials increases, so do the prices of the objects. One disadvantage of this is that if a candelero were to cost 200 pesos, a 1000-peso bill could buy five. If the price of the same candelero rises to 250 pesos, the same amount could only buy four. Then there is always the problem that people want quality but do not want to pay the price. Doña Lucía and her son were two of the few Huaquechultecos I spoke to who believe that the tradition of Todos Santos is dying out. Many others, out of sheer pride in their town's fiestas, insist it is as strong as ever. With regard to economic alternatives, Don Mario told me that he once had the opportunity to study for the priesthood in Mexico City but decided instead to remain in his village where life was "safe and secure".

Case Study 3

Doña Reina, eighty-two years old, is yet another potter who was taught to work in clay as a child. She produces on a very small scale--some dozen candeleros and the same number of sahumarios --beginning in June. Her daughter brings her raw clay which she prepares herself. Because buyers prefer it, she works exclusively in natural colors even though some potters consider them to be porquerías (decidedly inferior).

Since Doña Reina's sight is failing, the decorations with which she adorns her figures are rather limited. Many times they are entirely unadorned except for a few dabs of paint--but she continues potting for several reasons: one is that out of sheer habit at this time of the year she prepares her tools and clay in anticipation of Todos Santos; another is that, although she is cared for by her son and his family with whom she lives, she likes to earn her own "centavitos"; most importantly, however, is to keep the tradition alive since even though her grandchildren like to help her, "most young people are more interested in making money without wanting to work much for it".

All figures are fired in the tleguil, little by little over the course of one day. She does not sell her work in la plaza grande --there she will sell her alfeniques which she begins making in September after she has finished with

her clay--but, rather, appears in the Sunday market with a basketful of her figures for several weeks in advance of Todos Santos. Her prices are guaged according to what other alfareros (potters) are asking that year.

Doña Reina was one of the few people I talked to who had definite, even contrary, beliefs to the mainstream Catholicism that, as Todos Santos drew nearer, became a main topic of conversation in my interviews with various others. She told me that the church does not encourage "pagan" beliefs because the dead supposedly do not return, but since people have been raised to believe that they do...what happens if it is indeed true? She gave me several examples to indicate that this may be possible. An evangelist once neglected to construct an altar for his deceased mother and on the night when her soul was to return, he dreamed of a long procession of souls carrying candles and flowers and his mother following behind, empty-handed. On his own death-bed, the man requested a priest so that he might confess himself, thus renouncing his evangelism. Another man once had no money to even purchase a candle for his deceased wife. On the day her soul was to return, he and a friend heard noises by the altar in his home and both felt a chill as if cold air was coming in. He knew then that his wife's soul had returned and he borrowed the few pesos needed to procure a candle for her.

4.4.1.2 Alfeniques (Sugar Figures)

Another more delicate addition to the ofrendas are the alfeniques made in October mainly by women and girls, although there is no great stigma attached to the fact that some men engage in this activity to a greater or lesser degree. Gutiérrez Esquildsen (1943:296), referring to the early writings of missionaries in the state of Tabasco, suggests that the sugar skulls now so popular in Puebla (see Photo 4) may have their origins in the human skulls once offered to the Aztec war god, Huitzilopochtli. These were also white and adorned with vibrant colors. While this is entirely possible, Huaquechultecos make no skulls of sugar but, rather, a local variation that takes the form of sheep, swans, doves and baskets of cacaloxuchiles, one of the most beautiful flowers in the area (see Photo 5). Making alfeniques is often a social occasion whereby family and friends gather for a few hours each day, if not to help, then at least to watch and chat. Preparation time for the sugar mixture is relatively short. The most time-consuming part is forming the hundreds of little figures that any one person or group will make (see Appendix B for details of technique).

Alfeniques are inexpensive to buy: a dove may cost 20 pesos¹⁷ ; a sheep, 50; a basket of flowers, 100. Not all

¹⁷ At the time, 500 pesos equalled one American dollar. Most alfeniques, then, cost a few American cents.

people who make them sell in la plaza grande, however, for some take their figures to the markets in Atlixco or Puebla a week or so in advance of Todos Santos. In whatever place, the procedure of making a purchase is the same: you are given a nido or nest of straw on which to place the figures that catch your eye. From what I observed in Huaquechula's plaza grande, chances are that one will end up buying more alfeniques than he had intended to due to their sheer charm.

4.4.1.3 Ramos (Taffeta Flowers)

Also in early October women and girls, mainly, begin making ramos or taffeta flower arrangements (see Photo 6) which are attached to tall wax candles that adorn the ofrendas. Because of the hours of eye-straining work involved as well as the cost of taffeta, the volume of production is extremely low--anywhere from four or five to perhaps forty or fifty depending on their size (very small arrangements are called ramitos; the largest, guías). I noticed that buyers from as far as Puebla would visit Huaquechula to purchase ramos, indicating that Huaquechula was one of the few villages in the region that makes taffeta flower arrangements.

Each craftsperson has, of course, their own individual style of ramos, some much more elaborate than others. The technique which I relate in Appendix C, and which I assisted in, is only one of many.

4.4.1.4 El Día de San Simón

The 28th of October is the day of San Simón when all those who died in accidents are honored. At two in the afternoon when las ánimas (the souls) are thought to return, the bells of the church begin doblando, --an eerie, melancholy sound so different from the usual call to mass. In every home the ever-present altar is further adorned if only with an extra candle. My informant, María, decorated the altar in her parents' home where I lived with flor de muerto (marigolds), a glass of blessed water, three tablets of chocolate, several oranges, one pan de muerto and two rosquetes (special breads made for Todos Santos).

4.4.1.5 La Plaza Grande

Between three and four in the morning of the 31st of October when women begin lining up at los molinos (corn mills) to grind their corn for tortillas to be sold later in the day, la plaza grande has begun (see Photos 7 to 12). Vendors from all over the municipio begin setting up their puestos at four in the morning in order to secure an advantageous location under the covered market area or around the fountain in the town's zocalo. By eight o'clock, la plaza is booming. Trucks line up in the streets bumper to bumper, row upon row of vendors sit at their puestos, be it a table, a petate (palm mat) or just on the ground. The majority of the people do not arrive until later in the

morning (around eleven or noon) when la plaza is so crowded that there is scarcely room to walk. Until then, vendors of similar goods establish themselves in close proximity to each other: sellers of flowers of every type in one area, of alfeniques in another, and so on.

Since this is also the day on which the souls of children are believed to return, a mass is held at eight-thirty in the morning. Exactly eight people attended, myself included, but I was told that the puestos could not be left unguarded at any point in the day since merchandise would disappear. Earlier in the morning I had lit seven candles on my hosts' altar in remembrance of their own five children and various other child relatives who had died in the past. María later set out a basket of apples and guayabas, one of oranges, a can of powdered milk, a fresh glass of blessed water, small panes de muerto and several plain flat round breads in addition to the three tablets of chocolate and flor de muerto left from the day of los accidentados. Many homes that have suffered the more recent loss of a child will scatter flower petals (the type does not matter) leading from the street to the altar in order that las animanitas can find their way. In the evening, groups of young people go from house to house where large altars have been erected, singing and playing guitar in the custom known as corriendo gallo (literally, "running rooster", but with its own regional meanings).

In spite of the religious ceremonies in honor of children's souls, the highlight and preoccupation of the day is definitely la plaza grande. By mid-day the plaza is packed with buyers and sellers, people renewing old acquaintances or making new ones in the hectic but festive atmosphere. Money, hard-earned, is spent on decorations for altars, utilitarian pottery, shoes and clothing, fruit and vegetables, tacos, sweets and soft drinks, pulque and other alcoholic beverages, almost everything imaginable. La plaza grande could be considered the climax of the agricultural cycle for crops are in or secure, money from harvests or wage-labor is relatively plentiful, and the fiesta of Todos Santos which coincides with it allows for the opportunity of large sales and social interaction on a scale seldom found during the rest of the year. Tired but satisfied, the crowd thins out by two in the afternoon and by dusk most puestos have been dismantled for yet another year.

4.4.1.6 The Day of Todos Santos

The 1st of November--variously called Todos Santos, Día de los Muertos or Todos los Santos--is the most important ceremonial day of the two-week long fiesta. Elaborate house altars in honor of those who died within the last year have all been completed in anticipation of the hundreds of visitors who would come to pay their respects over the next seven days. Petals of flor de muerto mark paths from the street to the altar, however humble, in almost every home.

Around noon, a festive meal of mole, tamales and tortillas is offered to all guests in the homes where the large ofrendas have been constructed. There are no explicit rules as to who may partake of the meal although guests usually choose to go to the homes of relatives, compadres or neighbors. Afterwards, visitors are free (and expected) to go to other houses to view their ofrendas and to partake of the hosts' offer of bread and hot chocolate. Despite the festive social atmosphere in the streets, a respectful quiet is maintained in the homes, for the families are still suffering the recent death of a loved one and the occasion is therefore solemn. Visiting continues until very late at night each day of the week and a household shoulders a phenomenal expense, from the construction of the ofrenda which may cost more than 50,000 pesos, to providing quite an elaborate meal by Huaquechultecan standards for one hundred or more guests, to serving hot chocolate and bread to hundreds more. Even though one may note differences between households in the quality and quantity of food and in the ornateness of the ofrendas between households, every one of the fifteen households that experienced the loss of a family member in the last year participated in the fiesta. All that is required of the guest is the presentation to the host of a votive candle for the ofrenda or of a small amount of money.

To the small altar that her parents had decorated in their own home, María added three white breads for las ánimas and gave it no more attention for the rest of the week except for changing the flowers once or twice.

4.4.1.7 Las Ofrendas

Small altars adorn every home year-round but, as one can see from Photos 13 to 19, those ofrendas honoring the recently deceased are extremely elaborate. All are constructed in tiers, each tier covered with white taffeta, plastic or paper, and represent an earth-to-heaven hierarchy. On the first level is usually placed a portrait of the deceased, surrounded by food and drink of which he may partake, as well as alfeniques, candles, flowers, and cherub or "crying child" figurines. The next two levels are assigned to the various hosts of God: cherubs, The Virgin, Christ, accented by more flowers, candles and bread. The very highest level is minimally adorned with a crucifix and flowers, perhaps more cherubs.

Some altar decorations may be purchased in Huaquechula, either in one of the three main stores or in the market. Such items include bread, fruit and soft drinks, flowers, candles with or without holders, Huaquechultecan crafts, light bulbs, and the taffeta, plastic or paper covers for the tiers. Other more elaborate goods must be purchased in Atlixco or Puebla, such as the wooden tiers themselves,

candle holders of brass, copper or wood, and religious paraphenalia. Within this array of items, one notices the presence of more modern ones such as light bulbs and brass candle holders.

4.4.1.8 Fieles Difuntos

November 2nd is the day on which it is believed that all other souls besides those of children and adults who have died within the last year return. At six in the morning, the bells of the church begin doblando to announce the arrival of las ánimas and mass is held shortly thereafter. All masses for the deceased other than the mass on the morning of la plaza grande are well-attended.

Around nine in the morning, villagers and their guests go to one of the two panteones (graveyards) located on the outskirts of Huaquechula. The one to the northwest boasts a small chapel and some rather elaborate tombstones that provide evidence of a past division between "los ricos" and "los pobres" in the village. This division is much less pronounced today even though the panteón to the southeast remains simpler. It, too, has a chapel but the majority of graves are more modest and the earth is bone-dry since it is located so much farther from Huaquechula's water source.

Nonetheless, once the graves have been swept and flowers cover the tombstones, both panteones are equally beautiful

(see Photos 20 to 23). The resident priest makes an appearance at both panteones to pray over the graves after they have been adorned with flowers, and burning candles and incense. Although he does not charge outright for this service, each group of bereaved will give him a modest "donation" of several hundred pesos, after which they will remain at the graveside to offer personal prayers.

The rest of the day and the evening is set aside for viewing more ofrendas, and at night a Baile de Calaveras (Dance of Skulls) is held for young and old alike. On the morning of November 8th, a mass is held to officially end the celebration of Todos Santos. All those who had constructed large ofrendas donate a small amount of money for the mass. The priest again reminded his parishioners to consider the Catholic aspects of the past festivities--that, for instance, the serving of bread and hot chocolate symbolizes the parting of the bread by Christ for his disciples, and the lighting of the candles on the altars symbolizes the light of Christ illuminating the path of the dead. Thus ends the two-week long fiesta of Todos Santos in Huaquechula for yet another year.

Chapter V

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND CONCLUSION

I have attempted in the preceding chapters to present a brief overview of both the theory behind my fieldwork and my fieldwork in the Mexican village of Huaquechula. The aim of this final chapter is to analyze my research findings in relation to the theoretical perspective I have chosen.

The study of a single community is not an easy task. A lengthy stay, while offering insight into a research problem, may also blind the investigator to certain issues as the "novel" becomes "routine" or as one comes to jealously defend "his" community against "the facts". Under such circumstances, it would be easy to assume a functionalist stance and see the subject community as an integrated and static whole if that is the impression it gives. It is equally as easy to impose one's own opinions upon the situation especially in Third World communities where the people may not have been exposed to such things as economic or "advanced" technological opportunities. The researcher must at least acknowledge if he cannot overcome these liabilities.

In spite of my preoccupation with the preservation of tradition surrounding the fiesta of Todos Santos in

Huaquechula, I have tried to view the community as an open and dynamic system. Influences favoring both change and stability come from within the village almost as much as it does from without. Throughout my thesis I have touched upon possible reasons for the preservation of a strong ritual tradition in spite of the fact that Huaquechula is integrated in various ways into regional and national contexts. These reasons will be drawn into a summary in this chapter.

Regarding the problem of "decoding" ritual, Vogt (1976:1) comments that it can be

a maddening intellectual challenge when the members of a society are not so articulate as Victor Turner's Ndembu...But when, as any Mesoamerican field worker knows all too well, the most common response of an informant asked why or what about a ritual is 'it's the custom', then the discovery and interpretive procedures are long and involved indeed.

Years of repeated observation of ritual may be necessary before meanings and subtleties are understood. Generally, though, ritual may be said to serve two main purposes: 1) as a communication system and 2) as a meaning system. In many societies, especially in non-literate ones, ritual functions in the storing and transmitting of information needed to perpetuate knowledge essential to the survival of a culture (Vogt, p. 8). In addition,

Symbols not only provide information, like a blueprint, for the correct performance of social and cultural behavior in a given society, but they also supply...models of the patterned processes of believing, feeling, and behaving in a society (Vogt, p. 10).

In a comprehensive study of Todos Santos in Mizquic, a community located some 40 kilometers southeast of Mexico City, Ochoa Zazueta (1974:157, my translation) comments that, "We know that the function of the altar is more complex and not so simple as to be able to specify it in a descriptive account". He does note (p. 156), however, that a costly altar does not necessarily coincide with the economic status of the bereaved, for an economically limited household to which an ofrenda has special significance will construct a magnificent altar whereas a more financially solvent household may simply comply with the minimum necessary requirements. A certain amount of personal satisfaction and prestige is gained from the quality of an ofrenda based upon such factors as its cost, the number of objects that compose it and the number of souls to which it is dedicated. A complete ofrenda includes the altar proper, flowers, candles, food, alcoholic beverages, and the rites of arrival, attention and farewell to the souls (Ochoa Zazueta, pp. 156-157).

It must be noted, then, that cultural systems are dynamic and subject to change. I draw attention here to the results of a study undertaken by Cook and Leonard (1949) in the state of Oaxaca. The authors discovered the possibilities of class distinctions between Zapotecos (small-scale agriculturalists) and Huaves (fishermen, often landless) based upon the characteristics of each group's ofrendas and

fiestas for the dead., the results of which are summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4 COMPARISON OF ZAPOTECO AND HUAVE OFRENDAS AND FIESTAS FOR THE DEAD

	ZAPOTECO	HUAVE
MOTIVES	-altars dedicated to "santos nuevos" (recently deceased) -guests bring a gift of money	-all homes have ofrendas dedicated to the ancestors -guests bring votive candle
PROGRAM	-individual	-communal
ALTAR	-pyramidal, 3 to 7 tiers	-division of altar into 3 levels: 2 on top reserved for God; 1 below for deceased
COLORS	-bright (pink or blue) combined with white for children -black, purple, royal blue for adults	-natural earth tones
BREAD	-anthropomorphs and animals -little bread, much fruit	-animals, angels, no anthropomorphs -much use of bread
FLOWERS	-"modern" flowers such as gladiolas -many artificial flowers -no wildflowers	-wildflowers -discrete use of artificial flowers
WATER, CIGARETTES	-2 glasses of water, bottle of liquor, cigarettes	-neither water, nor liquor, nor cigarettes
AMBIANCE	-social "mestizo" -brightly lit	-mysterious, solemn, shadow

It appears that Huaquechultecan ofrendas and festivities for the dead more closely resemble the "mestizo" characteristics found in those of Zapotecan farmers than the indigenous traits found in those of Huave fishermen. Motives for the fiesta and the social atmosphere in Huaquechula during this time are definitely "mestizo" oriented; the altars and their adornments also diverge from the more subtle indigenous use of color and decoration.

Examples of mestizo influence which manifests itself in class distinctions are abundant in the literature. The Nahuatl village of Atla, Puebla, for instance, still adheres quite strongly to its yearly cycle of fiestas including Todos Santos, although prehispanic religious beliefs are in the process of being reinterpreted to include those of Catholicism, much as what has already happened in Huaquechula. Yet Atla differs from Huaquechula in that it is located in an area of large-scale mono-cropping. Seven or eight families own the majority of the land (20 to 60 hectares each) and hire 30 to 40 peones to assist with planting and harvesting of sugar cane and coffee. The majority of families own only 1 to 10 hectares but can occasionally afford to hire peones. The next greatest number of families, however, are entirely landless and men, women and children must supply the labor for the rich farmers of Atla (women are paid lower wages than men; children work as peones rather than attend school) or else

migrate to Veracruz or to the north of Puebla to work as agricultural laborers there (Montoya Briones 1964). It is not surprising to note that only the rich and a few middle peasants, with difficulty, can afford to be mayordomos (persons who assume religious cargos) for any of the fiestas. This is in contrast to Huaquechula where the majority of villagers own small parcels of land and class distinctions, while present, are not as obvious.

This leads us to consider Lenin's definition of classes (1914:421) as large groups of people differing from each other 1) by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, 2) by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, 3) by their role in the social organization of labor, and 4) consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Lenin (1943) viewed the Russian countryside as being divided into three main classes: 1) landlords and rich peasants; 2) rural poor; and 3) middle peasants. The power of the landlord and rich peasant class may be judged by the amount of land it owns, which it is free to buy ("in perpetuity") and sell. In addition, landlords and rich peasants are able to employ laborers to work this land. They harvest more corn than is needed to supply their families and also engage in other lucrative endeavors such as market gardening, livestock raising and trade.

The rural poor that comprise the great majority of the rural populace lack the money to invest in machinery, taxes and fodder needed to enhance their small-scale agricultural endeavors. Thus, their crops are insufficient to feed even themselves. Suffering from population growth and congestion on poor-quality land, the rural poor have no other choice but to lease or sell whatever land they own and enter the labor-force as full or semi-proletarians. The middle peasantry, according to Lenin, is located halfway between the rich peasantry and wage laborers. Although middle peasants are sometimes able to hire farmhands, they cannot really afford to abandon their land and join the labor force. Thus, they "make ends meet" but save little.

One may deduce from the data gathered in Huaquechula that the village is one of middle peasants. The majority of the people own some land. Occasionally a household such as that of my informant's brother can afford to hire a few day-laborers. A class of rural proletarians does not exist to any great degree although a good number of young people have begun to work or study elsewhere (usually in Puebla or Mexico City) and some married men go periodically to work in the United States. Households tend instead to engage in one or more economic endeavors in addition to working the land, a trend that Vogt (1976:193) noted in Zinacantan as a result of land shortage.

Even more important, perhaps, is that the loyalty of the middle peasantry, especially, tends to lie with the landlord and rich peasant class which deceives middle peasants into believing that they, too, may advance economically (Lenin 1943:275). This fact was outstanding in a conversation I had with my informant during a regional election campaign. As candidates from each political party visited Huaquechula, I would ask María what exactly their platforms were. Regarding the communist party, María was adamant in her opinion that it wanted to take away a good portion of people's land and that, when you die, what little land you had left reverts to the state and not to your children. This was why, to her, private ownership of land was so important.

Adherence to a dominant political ideology, however, does not explain all facets of social phenomena. In a comparative study of myth and social structure of two Nahuatl groups in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, Taggart (1983) discovered that each group tells the same stories differently according to whether the village is "ethnically stratified" or "monoethnic". Huitzilan de Serdán came under Spanish domination in the seventeenth century due to desired mineral resources in the area. In the nineteenth century, federal programs commoditized all communal land and imposed coffee as the primary cash crop. Thus, large landowners not only acquired fertile land for crops and pasturage, but also

a cheap labor force in the disinherited peasants. Santiago de Yaonáhuac was spared domination by the Spaniards since it lacked strategic resources. Even today, its social structure is more egalitarian than that of Huitzilán. Not surprisingly, the myths of Yaonáhuac have diverged less from the prehispanic originals than those of Huitzilán which incorporate to a greater degree Spanish motifs and personalities. What is more interesting, however, is that Huitzilán retains certain possible prehispanic traditions such as having an intermediary ask for a bride's hand in marriage. Taggart (p. 51) claims that, to an extent, "The Huitzilán Nahuatl have resisted the erosion of their cultural tradition, a resistance based on their resentment of Hispanic wealth, power, and influence". Whether or not "resentment" has anything to do with preservation of tradition in Huitzilán, Steward (quoted on page 17 of this thesis) is correct in assuming that "a cultural whole does not change in its totality at each moment of history". While Huitzilán has been exposed to radical changes in its economic realm, this does not mean that its cultural traditions were automatically affected as well.

Another outstanding aspect in the preservation of tradition and specifically regarding the fiesta of Todos Santos is that in virtually every study of Nahuatl culture, one notes the persistence of belief in las ánimas which has been summarized as follows:

In each home, the dead are offered flowers, food, fruit and incense because they are loved, because it is hoped they realize that their living relatives observe a moral life; the bereaved conduct themselves well because they desire that, when the souls of the dead return, they do not suffer the sorrow, the pain of seeing the living disconcerted, lazy or degraded, but on the contrary, that when the souls return to the region of the shadows, they go content, because their kindred observe an exemplary life (Cortina 1943:45, my translation).

While changes may occur in various spheres of Nahuatl culture, belief in las ánimas persists. In Atla, for example, even though Montoya Briones (1964:188) comments that individual beliefs range chaotically from prehispanic to Catholic with no apparent consensus, this is not illustrative of socio-cultural disintegration but rather of reintegration and reinterpretation. Even in Mizquic, where the fiesta of Todos Santos has been commoditized as a tourist attraction, Ochoa Zazueta (1974:8, my translation) notes the integrating effects of the celebration:

To know that the dead live, to believe that death signifies life, is very relevant; it conforms to the idea of the community in an historically conscious perspective, it produces a human work in favor of the old institutions which the dead guard, and provides a certain act of solidarity to a group which each day needs more cohesion and more elements against the forces of disintegration that wait for it.

This integrating factor is also noticeable in Huaquechula in spite of the fact that the state has recently initiated a competition for the quality of ofrendas which the community has won for three consecutive years. Admittedly, the economic benefits of this encouragement accrue not to the

townspeople themselves but rather to shopkeepers and fruit and flower vendors in Huaquechula, Atlixco and Puebla who supply the necessary items that adorn the ofrendas. Given the fact that Huaquechula has prehispanic roots and is now cabecera of the municipio, it may even be possible that, in some larger plan, Todos Santos in Huaquechula is destined to become a tourist attraction as it has in Mizquic. In a way, Huaquechultecos have a reputation to live up to, and the church is always there to remind the people of their duty to God and the deceased for, although it does not encourage "pagan" ritual, the Catholic Church regards Todos Santos to be the most important celebration of the year. The church may have been the driving force behind the preservation of ritual traditions such as Todos Santos for years, in accord with the agricultural cycle which coincides with it, and, since Huaquechula has a resident priest, the ideological domination of the church that Marx, Lenin, Althusser and others speak of was so much more facile. Now, however, it is possible that the state has co-opted the church's function by capitalizing on the very "pagan" beliefs and practices that Catholicism has tried to discourage. But all this is not as simple as one "taking over" from the other. Although church and state are separate powers in Mexico, this separation is only nominal. It could be said, then, that both church and state, to varying degrees, encourage the preservation of a tradition for their own ends, and that the people are not opposed to it. They, too, have their

motives for continuing on in this manner, be it out of defense against communal disintegration and the need for communal solidarity, actual belief in souls returning, or whatever the reason. In any case, the whole village participates, and the fact that all fifteen of the recently bereaved families constructed altars during my period of research suggests that they had at least the minimum financial capacity to do so. While the younger generation may be skeptical, the middle-aged and elderly still retain a gamut of beliefs regarding las ánimas, much as they do in Atla: one should not shed tears when a child dies since their souls will not be let into heaven because their parents did not want to release them from earth; on the day of Todos Santos, those souls in purgatory are allowed to rest while those in Hell never rest.

It is my opinion that the elaborate fiesta of Todos Santos in Huaquechula will continue, perhaps even gain importance, for several reasons. First, the fact that the agricultural cycle reaches its climax at this time is conducive to the high degree of capital outlay necessary to perpetuate the celebration as well as to provide a well-deserved period of social interaction between villagers and visitors alike. Secondly, this extravagant spending and ambiance is being encouraged from without in the form of a state-level competition which serves to increase the community's pride and to make it aspire to whatever subtle

motives may be behind it. The fact that Huaquechula may be a community of middle peasants and not overly impoverished nor wealthy lends to its financial capability of continuing tradition and ritual expense. Third, the majority of Huaquechultecos are pious Catholics who still retain the prehispanic belief in las ánimas to varying degrees. To neglect paying tribute to the dead would be disrespectful, anti-social and, perhaps in the eyes of the church, even heretical.

It may be seen, then, that the problem of why a community preserves its cultural traditions so strongly is a combination of many factors. It is not simply a matter of where it may hypothetically lie on a "folk-urban continuum", for this would be virtually impossible to determine given the variation of socio-economic and political factors present in any social formation. Huaquechula, for instance, plays a strategic role in Mexico's socio-economic formation as a supplier of agricultural produce to other major centers, yet these regional ties are actually a limiting rather than a progressive force. In such a context, this limitation cannot be related to the inherent conservatism of the people themselves for it is not they who determine Huaquechula's larger economic role in the area. Lacking land and capital to expand their agricultural endeavors and apprehensive of having what little they may own taken away from them, Huaquechultecos continue on with the mode of

subsistence available to them. Whether one prefers to view this as a separate mode of production or as the makings of a potential rural proletariat would require further study, but Huaquechula appears at this point in time to be a village of middle peasants influenced as much from outside socio-economic and ideological factors as it is from its own internal dynamics.

Appendix A
POTTERY-MAKING

Clay is fairly abundant around Huaquechula but is usually acquired from deposits near Santo Domingo to the south. A mixture of two types of clay, black and yellow, is used and prepared in a similar manner by all: water is added to and allowed to saturate the raw clay, then mixed thoroughly. Into a rectangular depression in the ground (perhaps 5 feet x 3 feet x 6 inches) bordered by wooden slats, sifted sand is spread thickly and evenly. In one corner are three upright wooden stakes no higher than the pit is deep. On top of these stakes is placed a circular wooden platter about 13 inches in diameter and, atop this, a chiquihuite (handle-less basket). The mixed clay is put into the chiquihuite and beaten well--the basket serves as a sieve to separate the impurities which remain in the chiquihuite from the fine clay which falls out onto the sand below (see figure 1).

The impurities left behind are sometimes used to make adobe bricks. The clay is mixed with more sand and water to arrive at the proper consistency and stored in plastic to keep it moist.

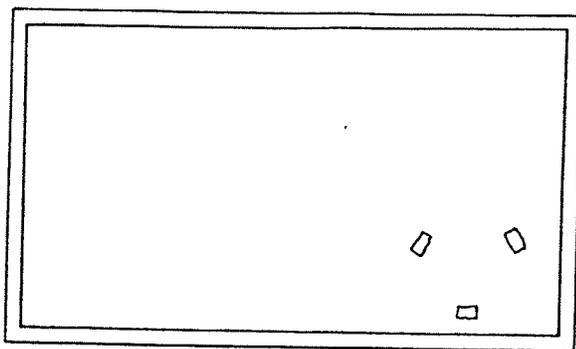


Figure 1: RECTANGULAR PIT WITH SAND-COVERED FLOOR (AERIAL VIEW)



Figure 2: CHIQUIHUIITE ON WOODEN PLATTER

All clay figures are mold-made in successive stages by using convex molds. A candelero, for example, consists of two or three main parts: the base, the tube and sometimes decorations such as handles or mold-pressed saints or cherubs. A piece of clay is rolled out to an appropriate

thickness (all figures come in various sizes), fitted over a conical mold base and smoothed and trimmed to remove rough seams and edges. Another piece is flattened around a cylindrical shape (a piece of cane or broomstick) and again cut and smoothed to form a tube. After several minutes the clay can be carefully removed from the molds and the parts attached by smoothing the base of the tube over the apex of the cone. A thin coil of clay is added to this juncture and drawn out into a flat rim. Figures added to the tube are mold-made; handles are simple coils; but decorations or lack thereof are purely a matter of personal taste and ability, not of necessity (see figure 3).

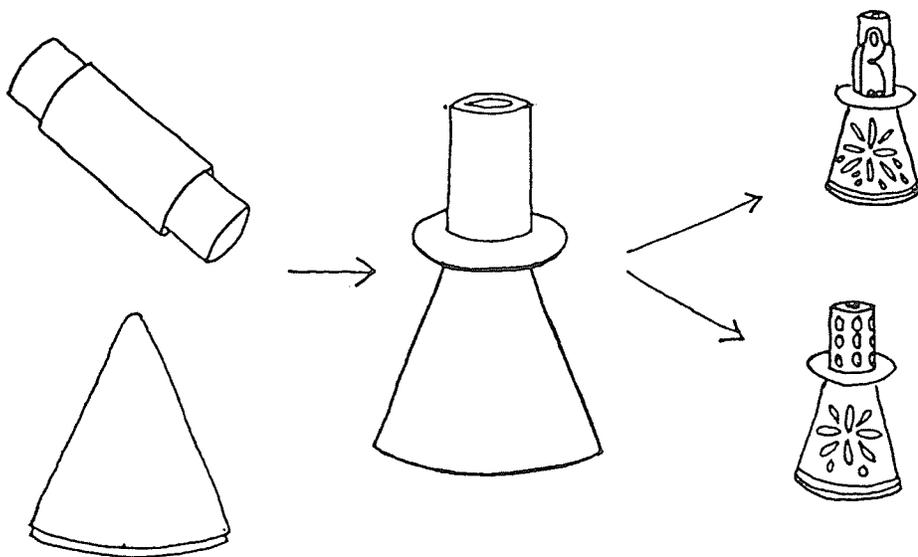


Figure 3: STAGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CANELERO

The candeleros are then left to dry until time is found to fire them. Most potters have simple brick kilns that are wood-fuelled. Others who produce limited amounts of candeleros and sahumarios either use another potter's kiln or fire in a tlequil. The clay figures are carefully arranged on top of wood splashed with petroleum in the tlequil, more wood is placed around and over them and set alight. When the wood has burnt away to ash, the figures are completely fired. Whether in kiln or tlequil, the figures are fired only once, after which they are ready to be gessoed and painted.

To gesso, the figures must be warm from a recent firing and then are simply dipped and left to dry. With regards to painting, the majority of alfareros are aware that buyers prefer natural rather than aniline colors since they render the figures more authentic-looking (it is said that sahumarios unearthed from prehispanic burials in the area had been painted in this manner), but not all work exclusively with natural dyes. The advantage of using natural colors is that they come in powder form and can be used and stored as needed whereas oil-based paints are expensive and do not last long, and varnish-based colors dry out too quickly. One disadvantage of using natural dyes for sahumarios is that when copal incense is burned in them, the paint gives off an offensive odor.

Painting, like construction of the figures, is also done in stages. Natural royal blue and red dyes are mixed with water and the red can be enhanced by adding a few drops of rubbing alcohol. All other colors are mixed with cola or glue granules which are boiled in water to form a thin gelatin. This is then added to the powdered dyes and mixed well. Too much cola causes the colors to blister and flake off as they dry; too little and the paint can be rubbed off with the finger. Few rules exist regarding set designs or color patterns. A figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe, for example, must have a red robe and a blue cape. La Purísima is always given a white robe and blue cape. Both candeleros and sahumarios have a rim of yellow and a thinner one of red around the base and top. Flowers, however, can have as many petals as fit without crowding and can be any color as long as those on the base and top of the same figure are not the same (see photos for examples).

Sahumarios are made in essentially the same manner as candeleros but using a bowl-shaped convex mold instead of a tube. Any decorations attached must be of a smaller type (usually mold-made flowers or cherubs) since they are supported only by the rim of the censer (see figure 4).

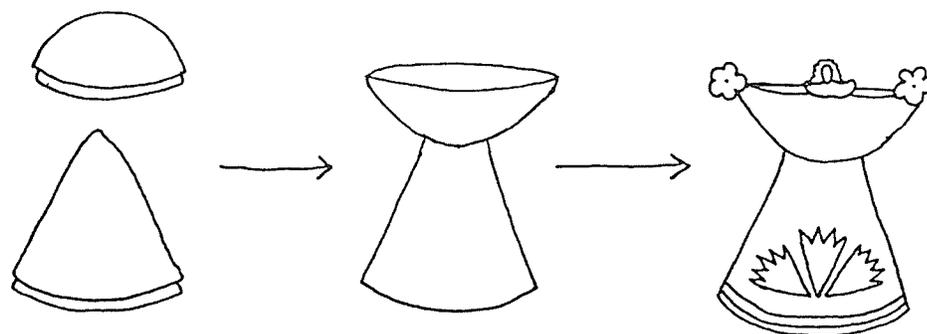


Figure 4: STAGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SAHUMARIO

Appendix B

PRODUCTION OF ALFENIQUES

A mixture of one cup of white sugar, one cup of water and ten drops of lemon is set to boil over hot coals in a metal brasero (brazier). The lemon serves to clarify the sugar and, as the mixture boils into a foam, all impurities that rise are skimmed off with a spoon. The mixture is ready when, after boiling for ten or fifteen minutes, a small spoonful of it dipped in cold water forms a hard glass. The mixture is then poured onto a wet comal (so as not to stick) and the comal is turned almost vertically, first to one side then the other, so that as the mixture runs it also cools and hardens to the point where it can be handled. By this time, it has become slightly opaque. It is then peeled off the comal, rolled into a ball and pulled over and over like taffy. Because of the danger of being burned by the hot sugar, many people do not care for this type of work, but there are ways around this problem: you can allow the mixture to cool longer on the comal if, for instance, you are working alone or, as in one home I visited, you can get everyone to participate, passing the hot ball of sugar from one to another so that no one person handles it for too long a time.

Once the sugar has been pulled sufficiently to the point where it is white and cool but still malleable, it is broken into small balls from which separate figures are formed. During this time, the sugar is kept soft by placing the balls next to the brasero so that while one may harden while being worked, another is always on hand. The figures are formed with the fingers which pinch and mold the ball of sugar to produce the desired shape. If too many drops of lemon have been added to the mixture, rendering it softer than wanted, the fingers are dipped constantly in white flour to help the figures harden faster as they are being made.

Appendages such as wings are attached separately after the figures have hardened. A ball of sugar, prepared as explained above, is painted with red, yellow, blue or green food coloring (the figures are edible although there is some problem with toxic food coloring in Mexico) as it is pulled so that the dye becomes incorporated naturally into the sugar. Wings are then molded by hand and attached to the bodies. Separate, colored petals are made by pressing a small piece of sugar between finger and thumb, the bases of three petals being twisted around each other into a thin spiral to form a flower. Baskets for the flowers are constructed by flattening a ball of sugar and drawing up the sides. When hard, the basket is supported upside-down in mid-air and a thin handle is attached from underneath and

left to dry in this position. "Wool" for sheep may or may not be painted, and is applied by pulling a small ball of sugar into a thin thread and making numerous loops around the body beginning at the base and working up to the neck. "Eyes" are small black seeds attached by pressing each side of the figure's head down on one. While the same basic steps are used by everyone in making alfeniques, details added to the figures are of individual taste, rendering each person's work unique.

Appendix C

PRODUCTION OF RAMOS

Thin pieces of copper wire approximately six inches long are burnt black to render them more malleable. These form the stems for the various types of flowers, each of which are prepared in a unique manner.

To make the centers of dahlias, a small bunch of ixtle (aguave) fibers are secured to one end of a wire by winding a thin strip of green crepe paper around the whole length of the wire using a bit of glue made from flour and water. This results in something that looks like a paintbrush until the fibers are separated one by one. These are then carefully dipped twice in a mixture called puchina --a combination of water, rubbing alcohol and yellow and red paint powders--and hung upside-down to dry. Later they are dipped into grenatín, a clear gelatin that adds shine to the paint and protects the flowers from gorgojos or cereal bugs (see figure 5).

Centers of daisies are made by attaching a small round cardboard disc to one end of a covered wire. The top of this disc is painted with the same puchina mixture minus the alcohol, then dipped into coarsely ground white rice which sticks to the wet paint and can be manipulated with the

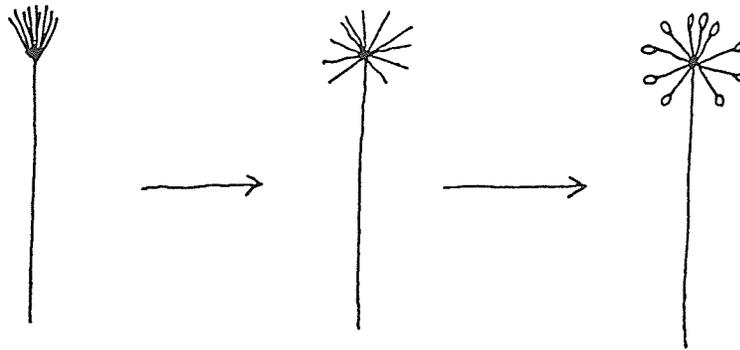


Figure 5: IXTLE FIBERS THAT FORM THE CENTERS OF DAHLIAS

fingers to form a small pile on the disc. Another coating of puchina is applied, the center is again dipped into the rice and is shaped into a smooth mound (see figure 6).

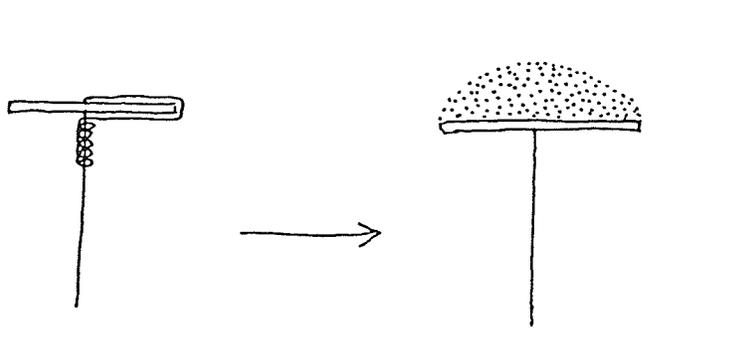


Figure 6: STAGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF DAISY CENTERS

A final application of puchina is given, after which these centers are also dipped into the grenatín.

Rose buds are formed by placing a small wad of cotton in the center of a triangle of white taffeta which is then wrapped and tucked around the cotton. A copper wire is wound tightly around the base to secure the bud. Leaves of various shapes and sizes are traced onto green crepe paper and cut out, and three small triangular ones are glued onto the base of the bud (see figure 7).

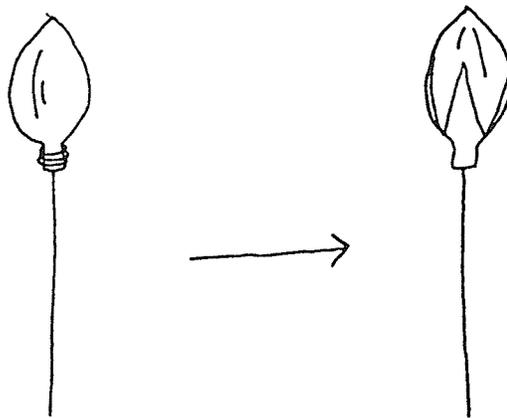


Figure 7: TAFFETA ROSE BUD

Once the centers are made, all the green crepe paper leaves are imprinted in their appropriate iron molds. The molds come in two parts: a hollow convex bottom with raised designs of the back of a leaf, and a solid concave top with corresponding raised designs of the front of the leaf (see figure 8).

The two halves of the mold containing several leaves are fitted together and tapped with a hammer to produce slightly

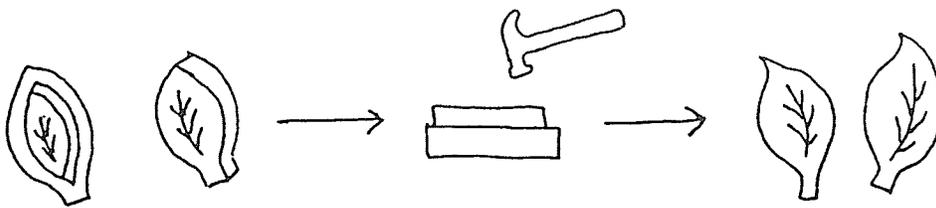


Figure 8: IRON LEAF-MOLDS AND IMPRINTED LEAVES

curled leaves imprinted with veins. Covered wires are then glued to the backs of the leaves using a scrap of green crepe paper (see figure 9).

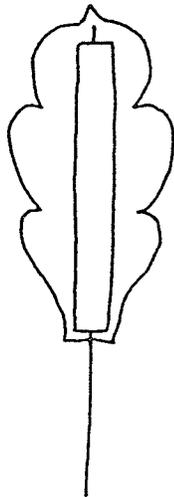


Figure 9: BACK OF LEAF ATTACHED TO WIRE WITH CREPE PAPER

Finally the leaves are dipped in hot wax, then immediately in cold water to allow the wax to harden, and patted dry.

Flower petals are made by stretching a length of white taffeta, dull side up, across a table, pinning it down and painting it with a mixture of flour and water to "starch"

it. When the material is dry, various types of petals are traced onto it and cut out. Each type is then pressed with the appropriate metal tool kept hot in a container of coals. The taffeta retains its shape by the cooling of the flour and water mixture after pressing (see figure 10 and figure 11).

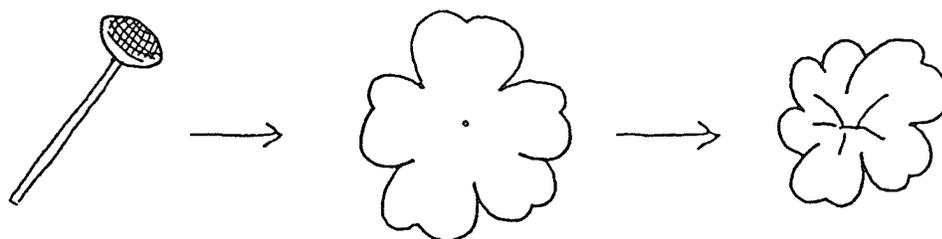


Figure 10: IRON TOOL USED TO PRESS ROSE AND DAHLIA PETALS

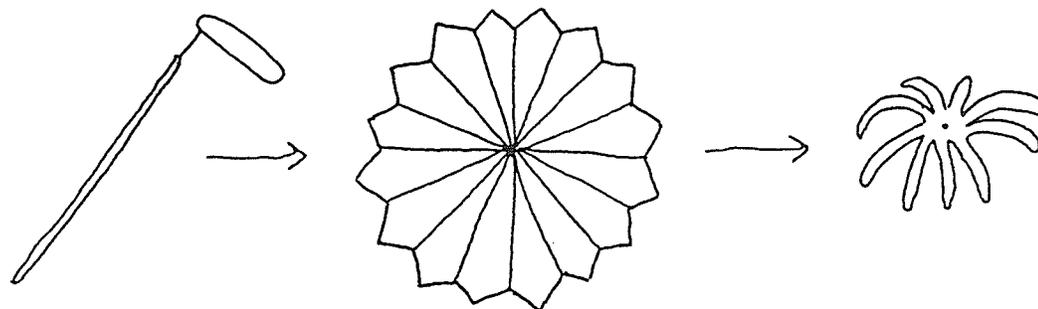


Figure 11: IRON TOOL USED TO PRESS DAISY PETALS

Depending on the size of the flower being made, one or two of the same type of pressed petals are pierced from the top with a prepared wire and appropriate center, petals and center being held together with a little glue.

All the separate leaves and flowers are then ready to be connected into ramos (see Photo 6). Beginning at the top and working down to the base of the stem, the wires are all intertwined and bound tightly together with another thin strip of green crepe paper to produce truly realistic-looking flower arrangements.

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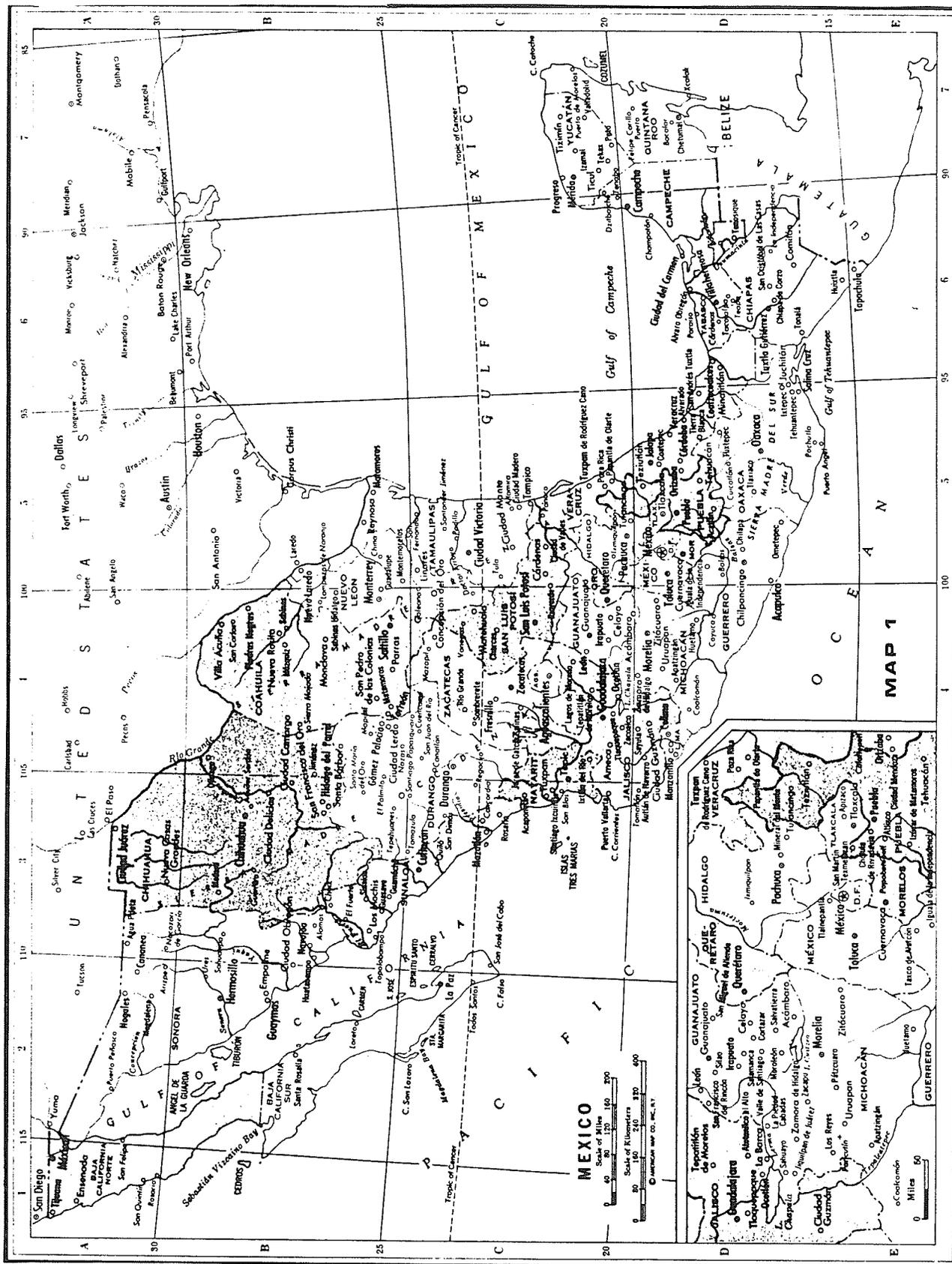
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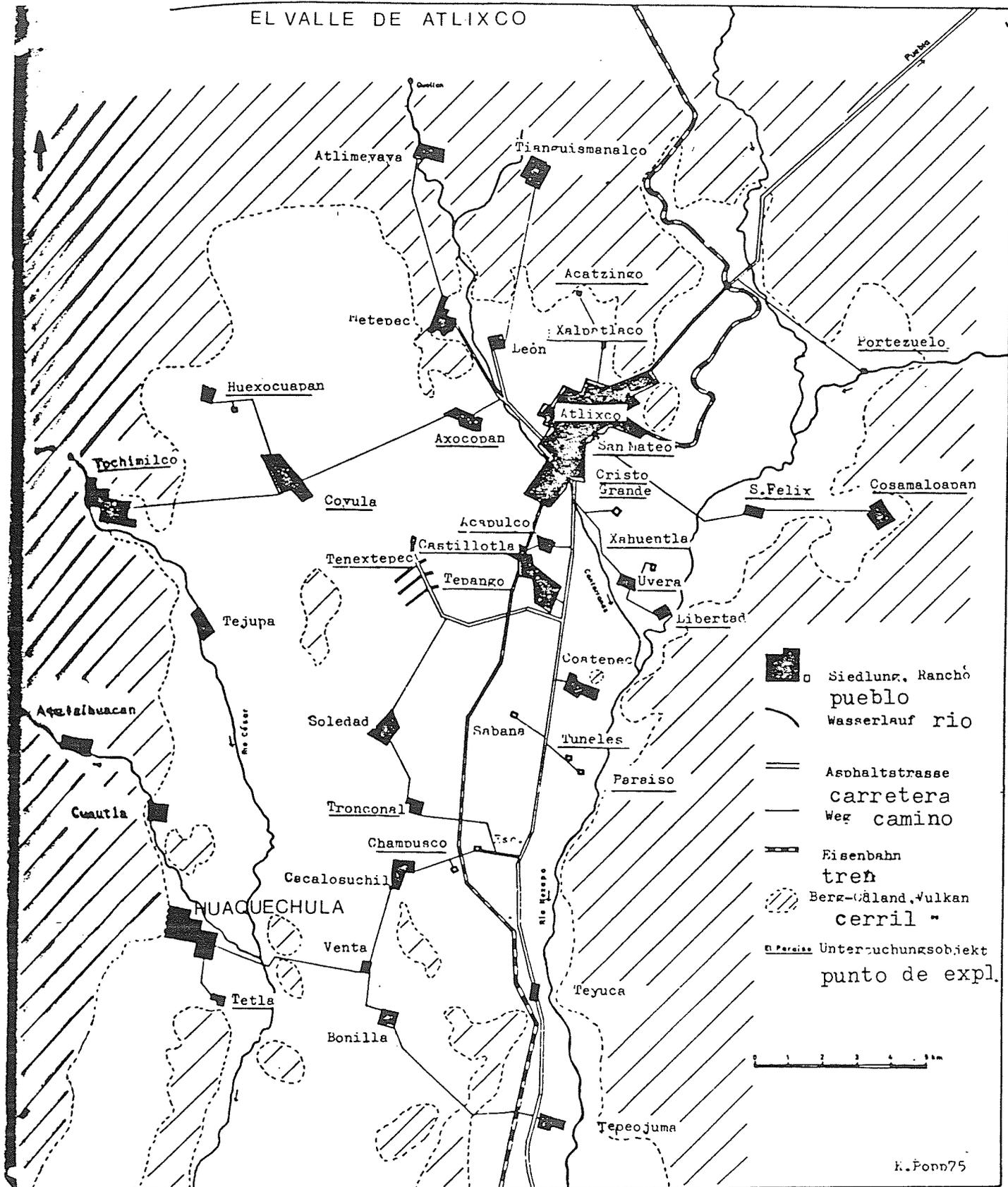
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PUEBLA



From: Oficina para el Desarrollo Turístico, Puebla.

MAP 2



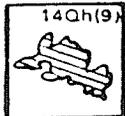
MAP 3

From: K. Popp, "El cambio del paisaje cultural en el Valle de Atlixco" (1978).

CROQUIS MUNICIPAL CON LA DIVISION EN AREAS GEOESTADISTICAS BASICAS



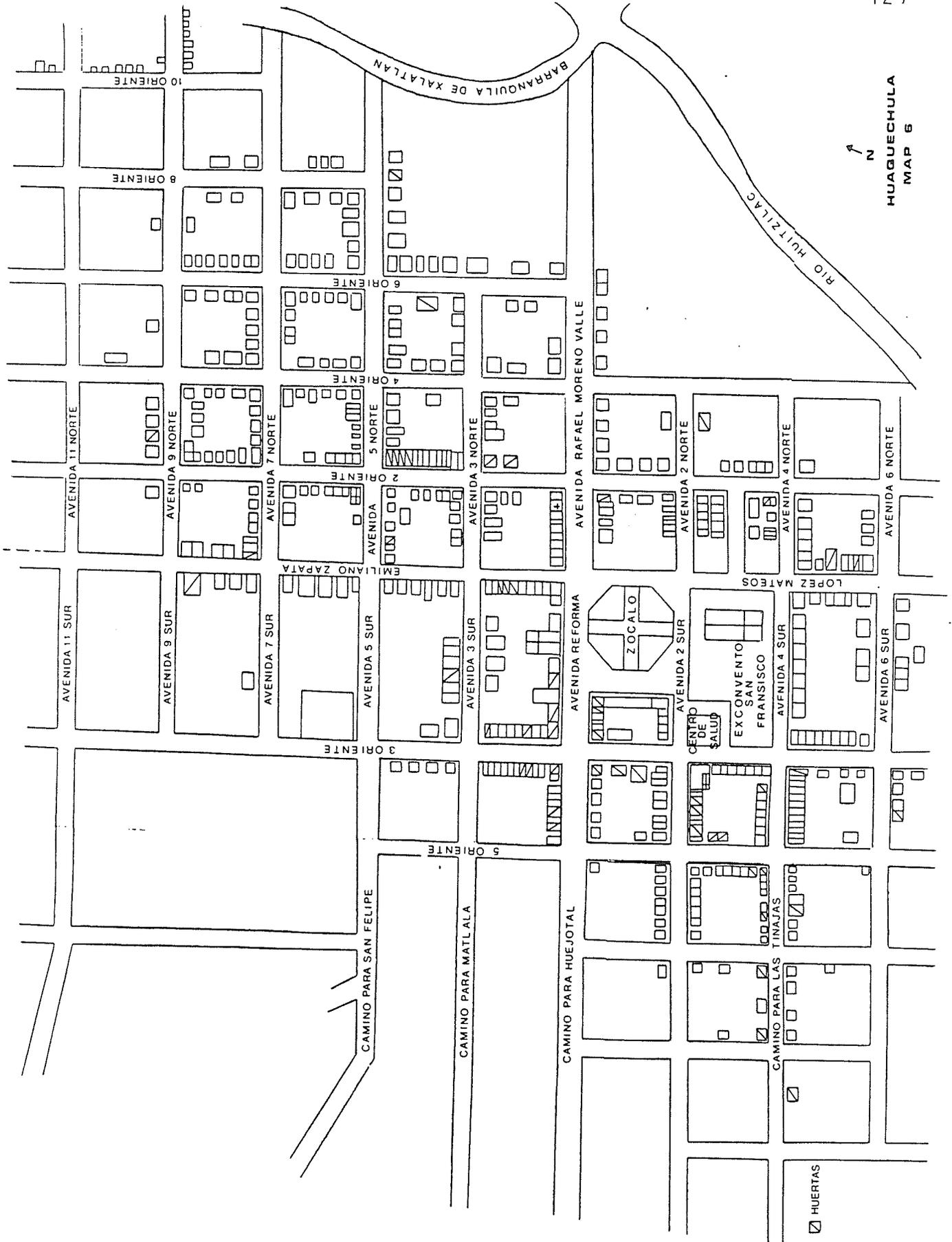
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MAP 4

From: Oficina de la Presidencia, Huaquechula, Puebla.

HUAQUECHULA
MAP 6



From: Oficina de la Presidencia, Huaquechula,
Puebla.



PHOTO 1 Candelero (left) and sahumario (right).



PHOTO 2 Miniature candelero (center) and sahumarios.



PHOTO 3 Muñequitos.



PHOTO 4 Sugar skulls from Puebla.



PHOTO 5 Alfeniques.



PHOTO 6 Ramitos.



PHOTO 7 Vendor of Huaquechultecan pottery.



PHOTO 8 Vendor of Huaquechultecan pottery.



PHOTO 9 Vendor of alfeniques.



PHOTO 10 Altar-breads. Rosquetes (front left),
pan de muerto (front right).



PHOTO 11 Vendor of candeleros and sahumaros for altars dedicated to adults (Poblano ceramics).



PHOTO 12 Vendor of utilitarian pottery.



PHOTO 13 Ofrenda.



PHOTO 14 Ofrenda.



PHOTO 15 Ofrenda.



PHOTO 16 Ofrenda.



PHOTO 17 Ofrenda.



PHOTO 18 Ofrenda.



PHOTO 19 Ofrenda.



PHOTO 20 Chapel of panteón northwest of Huaquechula.



PHOTO 21 Panteón northwest of Huaquechula.



PHOTO 22 Panteón southeast of Huaquechula.