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REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION CARRIED
OUT ON THE JALISCO COAST IN THE PILOT
STAGE OF THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
SYSTEMS IN RURAL SETTINGS PROJECT

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This paper is being circulated in a pre-publication form to elicit comments from readers and generate dialogue on the subject at this stage of the research.

INTRODUCTION

This report is the result of teamwork by the group that has been working in the coastal region of the State of Jalisco, Mexico, as part of the R&D Systems in Rural Settings Project to locate technological problems to which new methodology could be applied.

The group analysed the problems of several communities in depth and established close ties with the Nahuapa community, interacting with them in several aspects, including the matter of land ownership, organization of production, and relocation of the village.

It was precisely in relation to this last aspect that a strictly technological problem (architectural and urbanistic) arose which contained the conditions central to the problematic situation of the group and which required solutions that, although technological, could not be reduced to a mechanical application of traditional ideas. This can be seen in the failure of a government project to design and build a neighbouring village, Nuevo Santiago, at the same time that Nuevo Nahuapa was being created.

The group proceeded to study this technological problem and the relocation of the village within the context of the problematic situation of the community and later assisted the community in looking for solutions that were adequate for their needs and possibilities.

From this report it will be seen that this joint effort produced positive results in the solution of the architectural-urbanistic problem and also permitted the development of a methodology of interaction with the community which has proved efficient.

However, the problem did not require the development of new technological solutions, since the know-how and architectural-urbanistic resources utilized were relatively simple and known. The importance of the effort lies rather in the way this knowledge was adapted to a specific situation with special limitations.

On the other hand, the architectural-urbanistic problem was central, and once the village was relocated, it became secondary. In this manner, the group expanded its field of action and research from the very beginning in order to detect technological problems which could potentially be fitted into this Project and eventually develop into a design of new technological solutions through the interaction of researchers and communities.

The result of the in-depth work in Nahuapa, which required a socio-economic analysis of the regional problematic situation and extension work in a large area of the Jalisco coast, is a regional socio-economic study which shows the system of relations prevailing in the coastal plains and particularly in the Cajon de Peña (Tomatlan) irrigation district, which includes the Nuevo Nahuapa and Nuevo Santiago communities.

There are several general technological problems also discussed in this study which do not relate directly to the problems of relocating the villages, and these can be looked into eventually by the work group within the Project, as local conditions may require.

In this part of the report on the Maya group's participation in the Pilot Project, a regional socio-economic study is presented, divided in two parts: one relates to the subregion of the municipalities on the coastal plains, and the other is dedicated specifically to the Tomatlan irrigation district. The question of the relocation of the villages in this area is discussed in the second part of the study, with emphasis on the architectural-urbanistic problem and alternative solutions.

The case of Nuevo Santiago is presented first as a negative example

both in regard to solutions and in the procedure followed, in contrast with the Nahuapan case, analysed in the last part, in which the Maya group participated.

2. THE SUBREGION OF THE COASTAL PLAINS MUNICIPALITIES

This subregion includes the coastal plains of Puerto Vallarta, Cabo Corrientes, part of Tomatlan (excluding the irrigation district), and La Huerta municipalities. These areas constitute a specific subsystem, since they have the common characteristic, on the one hand, of socio-economic relations similar to those of the hilly region of the coastal municipalities and, on the other hand, of the incidence of two types of modernizing agents: tourism and commercial agriculture for outside markets.

It is important to point out that despite their proximity to Puerto Vallarta, these agricultural areas do not supply the basic food requirements of that tourist centre but they do supply an important part of the Guadalajara's requirements. This is due partly to the control that Guadalajara has over the city of Puerto Vallarta and partly to its control of some of the production in these areas.

2.1. THE PLAINS OF THE PUERTO VALLARTA MUNICIPALITY

Puerto Vallarta is outstanding among the municipalities in this subregion because this is where the dynamic of change has had an earlier start.

2.1.1. *The Work Processes Related to the Principal Products*

The main productive activities in this area are cattle breeding for meat and cultivating corn and bean crops (see fig. 1). To a lesser degree, chilli (hot peppers) and watermelon are grown and dairy cattle and

pigs are raised.

With reference to meat cattle, only a small portion of livestock is fattened for the Puerto Vallarta market.¹ The majority is sold young and thin through Guadalajara and fattened in other parts of the country. The cattle are allowed to graze freely in the hilly pastures during the rainy season,² and in the plains during the dry season, when they are fed corn and bean by-products in addition to the natural grasses.

Corn and beans are cultivated under relatively low technological conditions, although improved corn is planted in a proportion of two-to-one with ordinary corn. Primitive corn is still planted in the hills. These products are for local consumption and for the Puerto Vallarta market.

Sorghum is produced with a greater degree of mechanization and is used partly as feed for local dairy cattle. The rest is sent to Guadalajara and occasionally to Piedad, Michoacan.

There is a relatively small milk-producing zone near the Ameca River, carrying over to the other side of that river, in the Jarretaderas, Nayarit, *ejido*. However, an important quantity of milk is sent to Guadalajara, and an establishment was recently set up near the city to bottle milk (Red Seal) for local distribution, although the local unprocessed raw milk production is sold in Puerto Vallarta. The feed used for this cattle is mixed in the local mills, with capomo leaves from the San Sebastian and Mascota areas, locally produced sorghum, and alfalfa brought in from the north, outside the state.

Tobacco is produced in a relatively small area, with a high degree of technology that is typical in this field. The plants are supplied by Tabamex and come from other regions. The produce is destined for the company's Nayarit industrial plants.

Watermelon also is produced with modern technology. The area cultivated has grown over the past few years, although watermelon is still not a

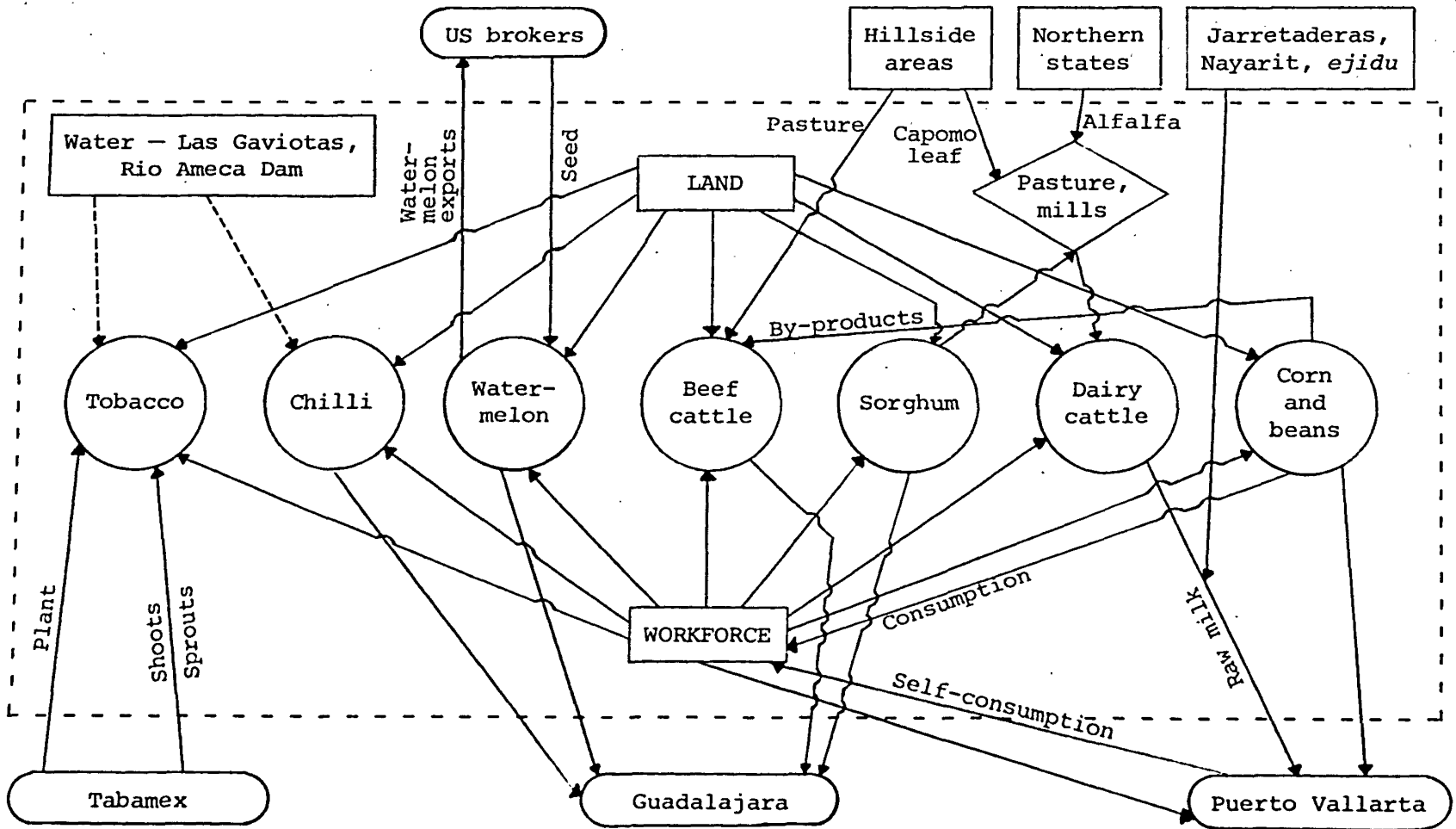


Fig. 1. Flows in Work Processes

major crop. The seed comes from the United States and the main part of the fruit is exported there.

Finally, the cultivation of chilli has been approached in a more technical manner recently, and the output is sent mainly to Guadalajara.

The cultivation area for these last products should increase as a result of the recently installed Las Gaviotas Dam in the Ameca River.

The region's work-force flows constantly towards Puerto Vallarta (and only occasionally to the United States). An important feature is the considerable number of women who go to Puerto Vallarta in search of work.

2.1.2. The Productive Units

As late as 1930 the plains of the Puerto Vallarta municipality were under a more or less primitive system of accumulation. They were mostly used for large-scale cattle breeding or for cultivation of bananas. For instance, cattle was bred on land owned in primitive landlord style by the Maistorena family, which had held enormous properties in Nayarit without capitalizing their vast territorial holdings until much later. At about that time, the Cuale Company was also breeding cattle on a large scale in this area, as well as exploiting the Cuale mine.

Banana production was largely in the hands of an American company represented by a man called McClelland, and the people of that region associate his name with the "Ixtapa Bonanza" period (1923-1930)³ when the company intensively exploited the banana plantations in the area. The product was loaded near the river-mouth for shipment to the United States. The banana company built a telephone communication system as well as a short railroad track to the beach; the remnants of these can still be seen. The work at the plantations brought people from the Autlan municipality. The working conditions were similar to those of other companies of this type in Latin American plantations.

The agrarian movement gathered strength in this area around 1930, based on the Valle de Banderas, Nayarit, ejido, which took over part of the lands controlled by the American company. The importance of this will be seen later. The movement continued and eventually the Ixtapa, Las Juntas, Colesio, Colimillas, and other ejidos were formed on the banana company landholdings. The company withdrew from the area.

When it became impossible to continue exploiting the banana plantations,⁴ the new *ejidatarios* started to cultivate corn and beans, as they still do to a large degree.

The same thing occurred with the cattle-raising lands, although these were less severely affected. The 1970 census mentions three private landholdings with 1,000 hectares or more, and one of them with 10,000 hectares.

But even though a great deal of land remained in the hands of the cattle landlords, they nevertheless regained their control over the ejido lands over the years. For instance, the Maistorena family's erstwhile representative is one of the several landlords who control ejidos and raise cattle on a large scale. This man controls the "El Guapinol" ejido and raises cattle in the area next to Vallarta known as "El Pitillal." Other names commonly known in the area for the same reason are Ibarria and Alcaraz.

The mechanisms that produce this situation are well known: credit at high interest, buying up crops, etc. These practices, plus the isolated situation of the region, eroded the feeble peasant economy and forced many peasants to rent or sell their agrarian rights. Others have remained perennially on the edge of bankruptcy and have been able to maintain their position as small, direct producers by hiring out to the larger productive units at low wages.

When the Puerto Vallarta highway was inaugurated during the second half of the 1960s, and the official bank (which has acted together with the high interest credit) came into the area, the peasant production started

to be more commercial even in relation to the traditional crops, and commercial crops of chilli and sorghum began to appear. This brought about an increase in the renting of ejido plots by the old landlords and also by the new *caciques* who started becoming powerful in the ejidos. At present a *yunta* (approximately four hectares) of land for cultivating chilli brings in a rent of 10,000 pesos per cycle.

The private landholders also plant hybrid corn, beans, and sorghum.

During a brief period in the 1930s, when the "El Aguila" tobacco company operated in the area, the cattle landlords took up contracts for tobacco production and subcontracted the crops with the local peasants, including the new ejidatarios. The profits obtained were very high, due to the conditions of the subcontracts.

The tobacco company did not stay for long in the area, and tobacco crops have only come in again during the 1960s and continue to date in the ejidos. The old mechanisms described above are occurring once again, with slight variations, and small plots are once more being rented out.

The commercial production of milk did not start until nearly the beginning of this decade. Although a few of the more prosperous ejidatarios have come into this operation, it is mostly in the hands of the old cattle landlords, and both groups utilize the ejido sorghum production, and in some cases their own, for this purpose.

2.1.3. The Process of Circulation of Merchandise

Each of the flows illustrated in figures 1 and 2 implies a contradiction between the agents and the social sectors which they represent, excepting, to a certain extent, closed or horizontal flows.

The cattle feed mills, even though they do not operate on a very large scale, are controlled by the larger dairy cattle raisers, who sell part of their feed to the smaller ones.

Neither the official bank nor Conasupo has eliminated the private speculative control over financing, production input, and products. Financing, input, and products have also been controlled by outside agents who receive the final product and who operate basically in the circulation of the merchandise. This includes the Guadalajara food market which controls financing and marketing of sorghum and chilli, as well as Tabamex and the American brokers who impose a more direct control.

Tabamex, for instance, controls credits and the principal input, as well as supervising the application of the input through their own technicians. Furthermore, the product is produced in greenhouses which virtually belong to the Mexicanized company, and the price is fixed by contract with exclusive purchasing rights for Tabamex.

In the case of watermelon production, the United States promoters provide the seed, although the credits have recently been provided by the national banking system. The exclusivity contracts are extremely disadvantageous for the peasant, as will be seen later in connection with the La Huerta municipality.

Another agent that has participated intensively in the circulation process - although not of the products since there is, in fact, a contradiction with the two - is the tourist interest which wishes to control lands, removing them from the agricultural and cattle-raising process.

The Puerto Vallarta ejido is probably the one that has been most severely affected in the region, but it is by no means the only one. It is, however, in a more critical situation due to urban growth. However, this ejido and others in the area have lost land to the numerous tourist and tennis clubs, golf courses, etc., that are constantly being built in the area.

The change from agricultural land to tourist attractions in the area cannot be considered a mercantile operation in a strict sense, partly

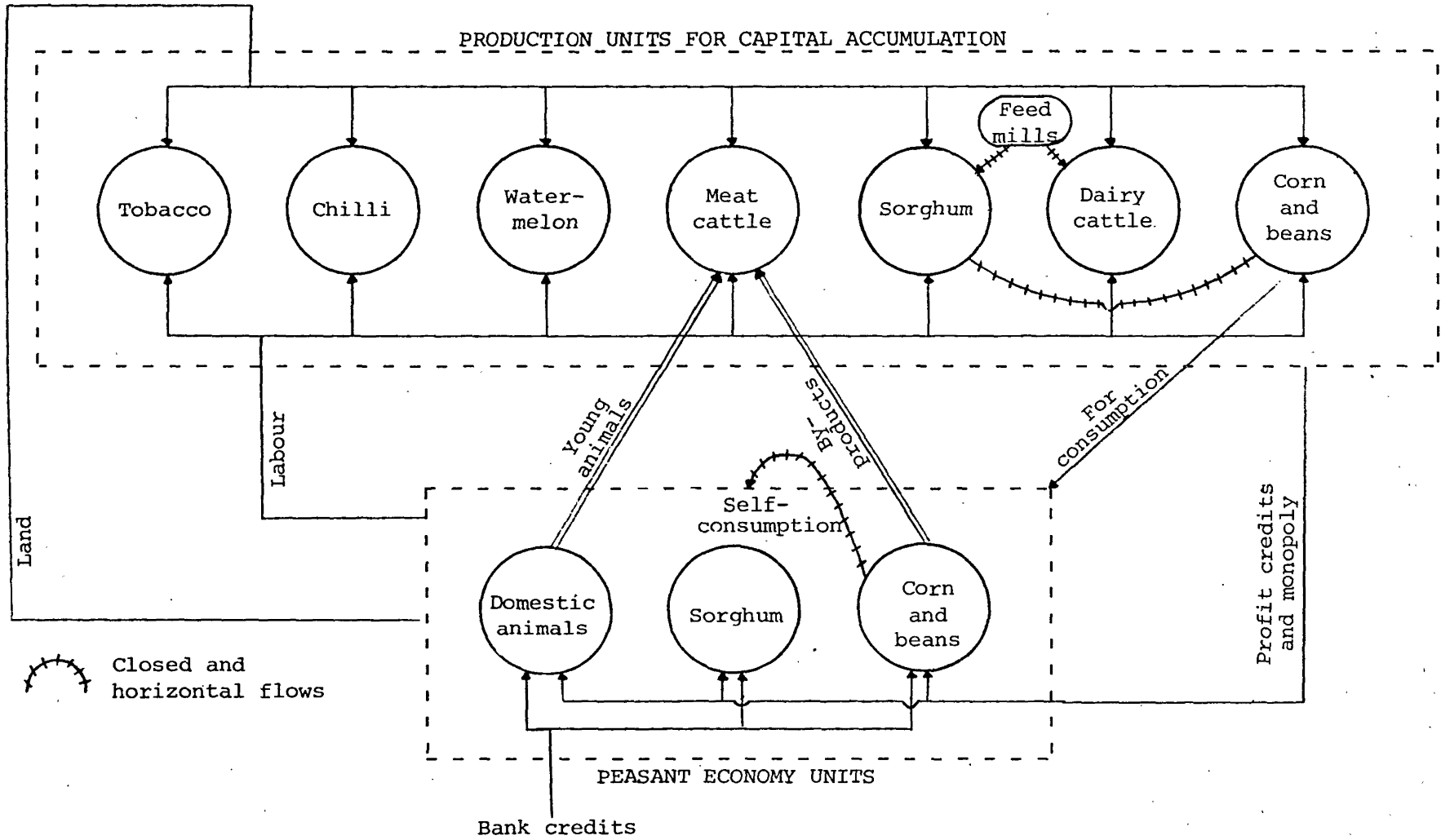


Fig. 2. Large Production Units and Their Control of the Peasant Economy

because of the inalienable right which the country's constitution grants ejido property, and partly due to the monopolistic-speculative nature of the operations which produce this change.

Until a few years ago, when agriculture and cattle production were practically the only activities in the area, labour was hired under the rudimentary accumulation mechanisms described earlier; the labourers had to complement their meagre wages, not always paid in money but in kind, by working as direct producers on infrasubsistence plots. This in turn lowered the wage scale.

Although it is true that tourism development has created a work market which hires salaried labour under permanent contracts for construction and services, it is also true that this situation has not filtered into the agriculture and cattle production activity.

On the other hand, the affluence of workers capable of producing enough from their own plots for infrasubsistence, both from the local agricultural zone and from neighbouring zones, has inhibited the growth of that market which operates on a fully capitalistic basis. In fact, a large proportion of the people who work in Puerto Vallarta are hired as temporary workers at low wages.

Nevertheless, the wages for labourers in the rural area of the municipality have increased considerably as a result of the competition which Puerto Vallarta salaries implies. The increase, however, has been neutralized by the rapid increase in the prices of consumer articles, characteristic in the areas of influence of tourist centres but which, in the case of Puerto Vallarta, has reached critical proportions.

2.1.4. The Mechanisms of Political and Ideological Control

Until the early 1960s the main political control in the region came from the traditional power wielding of the big cattle landlords and the new ejido caciques - those who had by then managed to control ejido

plots or made them available to the cattle landlords. The control mechanisms have already been described.

Although every new outside agent that has come into the area sets out to control the area or the specific activity involved, it is curious to note that the traditional power wielders have not appeared able to oppose this new situation, as was the case, for example, in Tomatlan.

This is evident in Puerto Vallarta, where the traditional predominant group has had to share control with the outside agents, who occasionally try to take over, as in the recent dispute over the municipal presidency. However, it is also evident that the traditional group has adjusted to the change, sharing part of the control, and even become a bridge for the penetration of outside agents.

An example of this is the part that the local caciques played in taking over the ejidos for tourist services. Without the help of the caciques, this process of "hidden" aggression could not have taken place without open confrontation of a more or less violent nature. The service rendered to the outside interests, considering the political cost such a situation would have demanded, has been amply rewarded. And, of course, every operation in which outside agents are involved has implied territorial manipulation.

In one way or another, the old interests and control of the banana producers or their representatives have managed to survive in the area.

When the agrarian movement started to create ejidos in 1930 in the Maisterrena and McClelland land monopolies, the small agrarian group of the Las Juntas (along the Ameca River) joined forces with the Valle de Banderas (Nayarit, on the other side of the river) and requested authorization as an extension of the Valle ejido. Since then, Agustin Perez Gomez, the representative of the American group's alleged "interest," periodically returns to the region and contends with the ejidatarios for control of part of the best ejido lands. This is done by establishing "rent contracts" with the local caciques (Ibarría) or

exerting pressure to make the peasants pay him rent. This incredible situation has produced violent confrontations, such as occurred in 1976 when the ejidatarios tried to recuperate a 40-hectare piece and were thrown out by the army. The man who represents those "interests" obviously counts on very strong support to be able to mobilize such a display of strength.

The problem has become more complicated considering that the Puerto Vallarta airport was built on lands belonging to that ejido, and the peasants there have not so far been reimbursed.

2.2. THE CABO CORRIENTES, TOMATLAN,⁵ AND LA HUERTA AREA OF COASTAL PLAINS

The analysis presented for the Puerto Vallarta coastal plain municipality applies to a large degree to the other coastal plains. The basic difference is that the process for the area close to the port took place over a period of nearly 50 years, whereas the process in the other coastal plains has taken place in a drastically shorter period of time. This process was initiated about 15 years ago in some places; in others it is as recent as just before the inauguration of the coastal highway in 1974.

The extremely rapid process implies that some of the stages of the Puerto Vallarta area process have been superimposed in this area and that some of the functions performed by different agents in the case of Vallarta have been assumed by one single actor in the other cases.

The result of the process, however, in its more outstanding features, has been the same: the local power group is a coalition of interests which centre on the tourist activity and on commercial agriculture for outside markets,⁶ together with the traditional ejido power groups which continue to operate as subordinates of the older group.

The population index had been low over the years when the coastal

plains were predominantly used for extensive cattle raising. This does not imply that there were no agrarian movements in the area, since various groups of peasants had been trying to get away from the rigid control of the big landlords for some time back, especially in connection with territorial monopoly. Other groups had been trying to get back the community lands that had been taken from them slowly over the years on the coastal lands.

There were two main agrarian movements. On the one hand, the Cabo Corrientes and part of Tomatlan groups formed the Ejido Union NCPE together with the "Alfredo V. Bonfil" Indian Communities (Comunidades Indígenas), created with the support of the State League of Agrarian Communities. The Union supported these groups in order to obtain political support.⁷

United States brokers have recently also come into the Puerto Vallarta municipality to promote the cultivation of watermelon for export. In another section of this study, dealing with the south coast subregion, a detailed description will be given of the way in which these brokers operate in association with the local power-wielders. At present suffice it to say that this new productive activity, also geared for markets outside the area, is one more step towards domination of the ejido plots.

Peasants who have been displaced from the land and the sons of ejidatarios who cannot aspire to an ejido of their own hire themselves out at a disadvantage to the larger production units. Since they are unable to complement their meagre wages, which are not enough to satisfy the family basic needs, by crops from their own below-subsistence level plots, they go forth to find employment in the tourist centres of Puerto Vallarta. Others who have managed to retain ownership of their ejido, even under very precarious conditions, also go to Puerto Vallarta for work when they cannot hire themselves out for agricultural work. Many of these latter ejidatarios have their plot in name only, having rented it out for three, five, and even ten years at miserable prices. This situation can be seen in the

enormous number of women and children from the rural areas who go to Puerto Vallarta in search of the lowliest jobs and often end up caught in the prostitution mafias that operate there.

Consequently, the peasant economic units are reduced to raising corn, beans, and some sorghum, as well as renting out their agrarian rights to the commercial agricultural producers. Some of the peasants have raised these crops only sporadically, because the resources required and the inherent risks nearly always force them to abandon the operation in a very short time.

Aside from the wages mentioned above, these peasants complement their precarious economy by diversified family production on a small scale. This includes family or domestic livestock-raising, which serves as an emergency fund. They are often forced to sell their animals to the bigger cattle-raisers for very low prices.

Figure 2 shows some of the elements described above, in connection with the manner in which the large production units relate with the peasant economy under the control of the former.

The general public became aware of the struggle of the peasants to form coastal ejidos against the opposition of the local traditional power wielders through a series of articles published in *Excelsior* describing the situation and the way in which the peasants were being repressed.

As the new ejidos on the coast began to gain strength, the problem at the Las Juntas and Los Veranos (on Cape Corrientes, a mere 30 kilometres from Puerto Vallarta) became critical when, together, these groups forced the cattle landlords, headed by Alfonso Garcia, to retreat. There was a violent confrontation and the army cavalry forces destroyed the peasants' crops in the Los Veranos ejido. The ejidos were finally legalized and Antonio Zepeda Facheco was established as the leader of the "Alfredo V. Bonfil" group.

The new ejidos, in the hands of the groups that had been fighting so long for them as well as for peasants from other areas, were soon granted a considerable amount of credits for commercial production.

The peasants who were native to these places had already been producing corn and beans in the traditional manner and continue to do so still. The economically weaker peasants who came from other areas also immediately commenced to produce in the same manner, and the first credits granted by the official bank gave this production a boost.

According to the head of the Jalisco Coast Commission⁸ the Union had cleared 7,000 hectares by 1975 and had been granted as much as 70 million pesos in credits (Banco de Credito Rural and Banco Internacional) with which they acquired, among other things, 25 tractors and dug more than 50 wells for irrigation of over 500 hectares, as well as obtaining irrigation equipment to be used exclusively in horticulture and fruit production.

According to periodical reports that same year, 13 of the Union ejidos operate on a collective basis, and 20 are in the process of becoming collectives. By 1976, according to reports, the Union covered 200,000 hectares, with 23 collective ejidos, and markets were being sought in Zapopan for their fruits and vegetables.

The collective organization of ejidos is described as the technically correct form of producing high cost and high yield crops. The peasants adopted this form with relative ease, not because they were interested in that combination which is assumed to be the best - "land, input, labour" - but because, in view of official agrarian policy, this was a way of facilitating the creation of ejidos and obtaining credit.

The process of internal polarization in the ejidos due to commercial crops which occurred in the case of the Puerto Vallarta area occurs in the Union group also, but at a much faster rate. There are innumerable complaints brought by the peasants in connection with

fraudulent operations of their leaders with credit funds. For instance, the Villa del Mar and the Jose Maria Morelos ejidos, both belonging to the Alfredo V. Bonfil union, accuse Antonio Zepeda Pacheco of taking 65 million pesos destined for peasant credits.⁹ Similar problems occur in the Las Juntas and Los Veranos ejidos, whose corn crops, which supposedly were to be sold to other ejidos, are "lost" and cannot be located.

The political power of the new ejido leaders makes it possible for them to contend for the municipal presidency against the traditional caciques. In spite of the efforts of these caciques to recuperate the municipal power,¹⁰ the Union group has managed to retain the presidency to date.

One of the credits received by the Union was used for the creation of a saw mill (in the Chacala Indian Community); consequently, the traditional power group lost control over those hills.

At the bottom of these conflicts is the struggle between the tourist interest groups in the area. The Puerto Vallarta Fideicomiso, supported by the traditional power groups, has tried to extend its control as far as the Cabo Corrientes and Tomatlan beaches, and the Union has stood in the way. On the other hand, a group of peasants who oppose Antonio Zepeda Pacheco within the Union has the support of the ex-director of the Trust. And Antonio Pacheco himself explains publicly the relation of the traditional power group with the great tourist consortiums.¹¹ Part of the credit granted to the Union is applied to the construction of an "Ejido hotel" on the beaches of Yelapa in the Chacala community, and at the same time "permission" is granted to a group of Americans to build on the surrounding beaches.

This has been a brief description of the processes that have developed in the area in relation to the new ejidos, grouped under the Alfredo V. Bonfil Union, that are located mainly on the coastal plains of Cabo Corrientes and Tomatlan. The following section will deal with the other agrarian movement mentioned before, which is geographically

situated on the coastal plains of the La Huerta Municipality, and those bordering Tomatlan.

A characteristic of this area is that most of the traditional landlords always lived elsewhere, although this did not prevent them from developing extensive cattle-raising activities. The administrators or overseers of these absentee landlords were only relatively subordinated to their employers due to the distances that separated them and the very occasional contact between one and the other.¹² It was only on the southernmost limit of the municipality that Longinos Vazquez, who will be mentioned later, exploited a large wood-processing operation on land "recognized" by General Garcia Barragan, although he left the area in 1955.

However, these absentee landlords came back to "claim their rights" when the area began to be developed. They found a modest but growing agrarian movement. Consequently, foreseeing future conflicts over territorial control, they took steps to protect their interests, such as subdividing their land whether or not there were agrarian claims on it and intervening in the agrarian groups, including the formation of groups of peasants loyal to them. This action produced innumerable conflicts between the agrarian groups and within them; in the short period of time that these ejidos have existed, there has been a great deal of violence and corruption.

In the meantime, the landlords have invested money mainly in fruit production. The ejidos have received credits for similar purposes, and the ejido productive activity has followed the previously described patterns of concentration and monopolistic operations.

These same landlords have started to operate in tourist services; only a few have done so on their own, as in El Tecuan, because the majority have become associated with the big international trusts, such as Club Mediterraneo.

Thus the coastal tourist centres¹³ have been coming up under various

names and, apart from those already mentioned, there are now others such as Chamela and Tenacatita.

2.3. CONCLUSION

The interests surrounding the tourist activity and the commercial agriculture production for markets outside the coastal plains have taken over in this subregion, with the traditional (mostly cattle) landlords and the new ejido caciques serving as "bridges" or stepping stones. When there is a contradiction between the two types of power groups mentioned, it is because of a conflict between the tourist interest groups. The traditional power groups act directly in the tourist activity in some cases.

Aside from the peculiarities of the variations and conflicts mentioned, and regardless of the speed with which the processes of change have taken place, the final outcome seems to be essentially the same: joint control by the power groups, dominated mostly by the modernizing agents, who obtain big profits by territorial control and domination of the peasant population.

It is evident that, for the controlling groups, obtaining a reasonable return on their capital is not sufficiently attractive to induce them to modify their production, quantitatively or qualitatively, as the country requires to satisfy its food requirements.

It is equally evident that the combined interests described operate as a narrow system which could not admit the introduction of new agents who might try to promote the production that the country needs -- unless, of course, the presence of these agents were to help the power groups to increase their profits.

Any external agent who would try to enter this area with the desire to promote peasant production for the national interests would have to face the options of reconciling the dominating interests in the

subregion with the national needs of food production, without reducing profits or local control but rather increasing them or else coming into opposition with them.

3. THE TOMATLAN IRRIGATION DISTRICT SUBREGION

The Tomatlan subregion is a geographic unit with the coastal plains of the Puerto Vallarta, Cabo Corrientes, and La Huerta municipalities. The modernizing agents have operated here more intensively than on the hills.

It has been considered that the Irrigation District constitutes a specific subsystem which is different from the rest of the municipal coastal plains of Jalisco due to the importance of the action of official institutions carrying out a "totalizing plan" for the development of the area.

Nevertheless, the district subregion shares two fundamental elements with the coastal municipal plains: (1) up until recently, the socio-economic conditions prevailing here were similar to those described for the hilly subregion and in spite of the arrival of modernizing agents still persist with different intensity and peculiarities, and (2) the modernizing agents in the region are basically tourism and commercial agriculture for outside markets.

3.1. GENERAL SITUATION

As in the case of the other municipal coastal plains, the main local product for a long time was "thin" cattle, which were sent to other regions for fattening (even as far as the United States) via Guadalajara. The chief crops in the area have been corn, beans, and sorghum; on a smaller scale, sesame, chilli, and tobacco have also been cultivated. More recently there has been some production of coconut, watermelon,

tomato, and several fruits such as mango, tamarind, and papaya.

This is a subregion which, as in the case of the other coastal plains, has remained unchanged for many years, in spite of its extraordinary agricultural and cattle-raising potential.

The reason for this absence of activity and investment in productive infrastructure has been the existence of the local power groups, predominantly big cattle landlords, who held and underutilized the local resources, taking over all the excess production of the local peasants and preventing them from accumulating, without investing their profits in modernizing the productive activities of the area.

The monopolistic control of the land, of financing, and means of production as well as of marketing processes has been held, often in combination, by a small group of caciques based in the Tomatlan municipality. These groups have held the local political power (the municipal presidency — el comisariat of the Tomatlan Indian Community). This presidency, plus their influence over the local representatives of the official institutions such as the SRH, SAG, DAAC, and so forth, was the basis for the reproduction and extension of their economic power.

In the fifties, the majority of the municipal land was "recognized" by only seven landholders who were dedicated mainly to extensive cattle raising.

The community land of Corralito de Piloto, for example, was an attractive prize for these cattle raisers. As late as 1939, the Tomatlan Tax Collection Office auctioned 1,769 hectares of communal land, an action reminiscent of the Porfirio Diaz era. On the other hand, in 1961, when technical-information work was carried out for an agrarian request put in by the Gargantillo ejido, the DAAC commissioner was arrested, because of the efforts of the caciques, for "not having advised Guadalajara." It was only through widespread popular demand, in which several neighbouring peasant groups participated, that the commissioner was freed, though he left the region after having been threatened by the cacique groups.

The caciques were opposed to any intent of modernization because of the danger of losing their political and economic power. For instance, by trying to stop the construction of the Puerto Vallarta-Melaque highway, they prevented it from passing through the Tomatlan municipality.

The possibilities for the development of the area began to take shape in the last few years through actions of several government institutions that sought to promote the agricultural and tourist potentialities of the area: the Puerto Vallarta-Barra de Navidad highway, inaugurated in 1974; the construction of the Cajon de Peñas dam on the Tomatlan River; the construction of infrastructure works for an irrigation district with the dam waters; and the establishment in the region of the official bank and the CONASUPO. All this is causing the peasants' living conditions to change slowly.

The monopolistic controls held up to this time by the caciques are beginning to lose strength. The peasant movement has been strengthened by the possibilities of contact between the local communities and the outside world as well as by the perspectives of increased land value thanks to the irrigation systems. This, together with the incipient capacity of the peasants to accumulate — which comes from the new working opportunities as hired hands for the government works as well as by the bank and CONASUPO — has given added zest to the agrarian movement, which is trying to expel the landlords (who are generally in retreat) and legalize land ownership. With regard to the cacique control over the peasants' productive work, these groups are making efforts to get rid of their control and free themselves of the monopolistic control of financial resources, inputs, and products.

All of this is beginning to establish conditions whereby the mechanisms of profit and control on the part of the traditional power groups can be replaced by the mechanisms of capitalistic accumulation. The old caciques are adopting different positions; some of them are trying to hold on to their old privileges, but as conditions that guarantee their positions change, they are beginning to disappear and withdrawing to municipalities like Cabo Corrientes, where they can still take their

cattle or sell them. Others are trying to adapt to the new situation. Using the capital and the political power they hold, they are slowly changing their position from primitive privilege groups to a capitalistic economy, and they are beginning to share their situation with that of external elements in providing for new accumulation mechanisms. Always, however, they are looking for privileges or taking advantage of new situations for their benefit and participating in speculative business transactions that are possible due to inefficiency or corruption on the part of the government; thus, they are taking part in a new socio-economic and political pattern that is evolving in the area. In spite of all this, primitive power mechanisms still continue to flourish side by side with the accumulation mechanisms that modernization is producing.

However, if the new mechanisms show a tendency to replace the old ones, this is not the case in the relation of productive units of peasant economy. These relations react and even change in the face of the new accumulation mechanisms on the basis of their own logic as "small direct producers" concerned first of all with guaranteeing family subsistence without adopting the logic of business economics.

3.2. THE WORK PROCESSES RELATED TO THE MORE IMPORTANT PRODUCTS

The irrigation district systems have only started to operate on a minor scale in relation to the forecast for the first stage. This has only occurred this year.

Nevertheless, the arrival of the official bank in the area, together with the previously described events, has made it possible for the local agricultural production to increase particularly the production of sorghum, corn, and beans and, on a lesser scale, sesame, chilli, and tobacco. As mentioned previously, new crops include coconut, mango, guava, and papaya.

As a result of the above-mentioned events, the competition for the use

of the land between agriculture and cattle raising (though still predominant in the area at the beginning of the seventies) has decreased considerably because of the retreat of the cattle raisers. However, this does not mean that this contradiction has disappeared.

Instead, what has now happened is that there is competition in relation to labour, since the use of wage labour for the irrigation works has caused a depletion in the labour for agricultural work. Therefore, the area is now receiving a considerable amount of outside labour coming from the hilly subregion of the Jalisco coast, from other municipalities in the state, and even from other parts of the country.

The future production structure of the area is still uncertain, and it is in connection with this structure that the principal comments on the region's work processes must be made.

The technical studies previously carried out, when the irrigation district works were started, probably indicated the potential of these lands for irrigation. Nevertheless, once the clearing work was done, it was concluded that because of the scarce amount of vegetable soil on the land there is a risk that the levelling process will sterilize the land. Consequently, the levelling work has been stopped. On the other hand, if the soil is irrigated without levelling, the land will probably become unusable in a short time. In fact, the same risk exists with rainfall.

Consequently, the SARH has had to consider the option of converting the irrigation district into a cattle-raising zone, which would revive the competition between the agricultural and cattle-raising groups in relation to the use of these lands. The groups engaged in this competition will be analysed later. The reaction of the local power groups to this option is evident: Make every possible effort to make cattle raising the only activity in all these lands.

Another element in the question of future production conditions is the question of the specific technical recommendations proposed by the

specialists in the institutions in relation to the optimal combination of agricultural land. For example, the Bank provides three types of fertilizers for sorghum production, but the peasants frequently prefer to store two of them, which they consider unnecessary — even if they are wasted — to prevent unnecessarily increasing their costs. The insecticides provided by the Bank are often ineffectual against the plagues, and the peasants try to save their crops by using others even if it means getting into debt with money lenders. In the El Tequesquite ejido, the Bank, on one occasion, insisted on providing corn seed from Zamora, Michoacan, against the proposal of the peasants to use the native seed. The experiment was a failure.

The foregoing examples are meant to illustrate the contradictions present between the peasants and the institutions in regard to the technical aspects of the work processes in the area. These contradictions become critical when the productive activities occur on land where irrigation is being established and where the experience of the peasants — and perhaps also of the technicians — is different. The case of New Santiago, which will be presented at the end of this section, illustrates this situation.

3.3. THE PRODUCTIVE UNITS

As already mentioned, the process of modernization tends to affect each of the different productive units traditionally existing in the region in different ways. That is to say, those that operate under the logic of accumulation — capitalized only in some cases — through the primitive accumulation mechanisms already described and those that operate under the rationale of the small direct producer are concerned primarily with guaranteeing the family subsistence and not with accumulation.

The first units tend to disappear or change into modern capitalistic units. In this case they join those implanted in the area by outside agents interested in utilizing the new conditions created by official

action. In fact, units of this type have already begun to appear in the Adolfo Ruiz Cortines Colony and on ejido lands that are beginning to be monopolized.¹⁴

The second units — that is, the peasant economy units — have been inserted more tightly into the mercantile economy. The economic, social, and political controls that had produced the primitive mechanisms of capital accumulation are beginning to lose their efficiency. On the one hand, the high degree of self-sufficiency of the family peasant economy decreases in the face of increased market economy; on the other hand, the virtual wage conditions under which the peasant had been obliged to work are slowly giving way to the condition of wage worker in a proper sense, either through labour contracts for construction of dams and other infrastructure works or through wages paid for agricultural work.

Still, the peasant productive unit has to utilize its work-force to the limit in order to subsist, and its final consumption — in spite of changes produced by outside market penetration in the region — is still at a minimal level.

Thus the peasant production units are still operating on the logic of self-subsistence. The process which will eventually help them find conditions that will lead them to the business logic is slow, and if they eventually reach this state completely, is, in the best of cases, doubtful.

This provides the frame for a new level in the contradictions between the institutions and the peasants, since the frame of reference for the action of the official institutes is on the assumption that the peasants have to act as "businessmen."

There have been frequent manifestations of this contradiction, especially in regard to the relations with the Bank, not only in connection with the technical aspects previously mentioned but also in relation to the socio-economic implications of some of the elements in

the pattern used by the Bank. An example of this is the obligation that the Bank puts on the peasants to plant and harvest the sorghum mechanically.

Another example, perhaps a more important one, is in relation to the intention of the institutions to impose collective work in the district ejidos. This is a typical case in which the Bank is considering the existence of resources such as "soil, water, input, workforce, and ecological surroundings" and is trying to combine them in the "optimum" way for profit.

After a bitter struggle, in which the Bank even threatened to "take away" the land from the rebels, the Bank officers were obliged to accept the peasants' proposal of "work groups" that are relatively independent, using the ejido as the credit subject.

The resistance of the peasants cannot be interpreted as "individuality," since the groups involved have shown a great capacity for organizing in connection, for instance, with the land problem. The resistance to collective work is rather a resistance on the part of the peasants to lose their capacity to deal with the Bank, which would happen if that institution managed to impose its organizing scheme; furthermore, the Bank's plan would limit them in being able to insert their productive activity (their main one, agriculture) in a flexible manner within the combined activities which the family carries out to complement its subsistence income.

The case of Nuevo Santiago, which will be described further on, illustrates vividly this problem.

The above-mentioned problems, which come up frequently in the relations between the Bank and the peasants in other regions of the country, take on special importance here because the Government's incidence in the area is of a totalizing nature. In trying to guarantee the recuperation of the investment in the irrigation district, the institutions act compulsively in trying to assign a specific part to each of the social

sectors in the area. The capitalistic groups would be willing to accept their role, if it implies privileges similar to those they can obtain elsewhere. The institutional inefficiency and occasional corruption gives them the opportunity for this, even if the country's food requirements are not met optimally. It would certainly not seem that converting the district into cattle-raising land would be the best option from a national interest standpoint. On the other hand, as long as the role assigned to the peasants endangers their subsistence conditions, they will be opposed to it.

3.4. THE PROCESS OF MERCHANDISE CIRCULATION

The participation of the Bank and CONASUPO in the marketing of the local production has presented many problems of the type already described. This explains why the peasants increasingly try to avoid dealing with these institutions. In fact, the local agency of the Rural Bank is undergoing a critical situation, since it has proved unable to contract an important percentage (probably about 40 per cent) of the credits programmed.

Obviously, the effects are undesirable. On the one hand, a sector of the peasant groups takes refuge in self-consumption and becomes more dependent on the local money-lenders, with the consequent negative effects on production.

On the other hand, the polarizing process within the ejidos speeds up in favour of whoever has more resources for work and those who take advantage of the situation to monopolize plots. These are not only the traditional caciques but also others who receive income for working in the government projects and who because of special privilege conditions (family situation, quantity, quality, location of their plots, etc.) are able to accumulate an important part of their wages. Thus it is now frequently seen that peasants who work in the dam and other government work employ other peasants, who are in a worse economic condition, to work their plots.

Finally, the foregoing explains the great ease with which some of the traditional money-lending caciques have adapted to the new conditions.

But the fundamental impact that has shown up in the area of merchandise circulation as a result of modernization and will probably have the greatest implications in the future is the labour market.

In the analysis on the hilly subregion of the coast, the participation of the peasant labour force in the productive activities of the power groups lies outside the mercantile process itself. This is due to the primitive mechanisms by which labour is obtained. This same situation existed in Tomatlan at the beginning of the seventies. However, in recent years, the capitalistic labour market has taken shape even more clearly.

The big demand for labour for the construction of the new infrastructure, and the fact that this labour is generally reimbursed with the legal minimum wage corresponding to the region, has begun to produce qualitative changes in the situation of the agricultural labourers.

The irrigation district before it starts to operate will require many workers. Those who have gone to live in the area as a result of this demand will surely take advantage of the work possibilities that are available. The poorer ejidatorios will also look for these jobs and because of the polarization in the ejidos they will tend to lose their position as direct producers and will have to become proletarians. There will also be a mass of ejidatarios joining these groups, and possibly this mass will be rather large, since its members will come from the peasant sector whose living conditions will continue to be affected by the modernization process. These ejidatarios, through perennially on the edge of bankruptcy, will continue to resist the proletarianizing process for a long time. The capacity to resist, which the peasant economy has shown not only in Tomatlan but in many other parts of the country, will then tend to produce temporary labour for the more productive units during certain seasons of the year.

A great deal of the labour comes from outside, and there is a reserve of labour which comes from the neighbouring municipalities and states in search of work in this area. On the other hand, the demand for labour in agricultural activities of the district is uncertain (pending solutions to the problems of technical use of the land); however, what is certain is that this demand will present strong seasonal variations as is the typical case in the irrigation agricultural activities. All this makes it difficult for the government to include this available labour in its totalizing plan, since the area has no capacity to provide alternative employment to the labourers during the non-farming seasons.

This problem occurred in 1974. According to L. Rovirosa Wade, then head of the SRH, "the IDB did not give priority to credit for the Cajon de Peñas Project, because the area was underpopulated and it would have been difficult to colonize, in spite of the good quality of soil and the possibilities of storing enough water."¹⁵

However, these predictions may prove wrong. There is still the possibility that the technical problems referred to will not be solved and that the district will not begin to operate on a large scale.

3.5. THE MECHANISMS OF POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONTROL

Before this decade, when the traditional power groups maintained their control of the area, the caciques controlled the state and federal government agents in the area almost completely. To the peasants the dividing line between the caciques and these institutions was blurred, and the only difference they saw between one and the other was in the manipulative and repressive character of the first.

When the modernization process started, official credit was presented as an option against the money-lending practices of the local caciques, signalling the beginning of the end of the rigid control the caciques had had over production resources and over the production itself. At that time, it seemed possible that a series of objective conditions

would create a positive relationship between the peasants and the institutions.

However, numerous difficulties came up in relation with the institutions of the type previously mentioned. And, in spite of the modernizing process entering into a direct contradiction with the primitive mechanisms that functioned under the local caciques, frequent cases of collusion, either deliberate or accidental, between government officials and caciques placed the peasants in conflict with the official institutions. This type of situation occurs more frequently in connection with land ownership problems in which, in one way or another, most of the institutions in the area are involved.

Finally, the apparent confusion of the institutions in relation to almost all of the operational data basic to the irrigation district (location and area of the land to be irrigated, land levelling, types of productive projects which will be promoted, etc.) produces a feeling of insecurity in the peasant regarding the future of the institutions.

Furthermore, experiences such as the case of Nuevo Santiago, which will be mentioned later, have emphasized the distrust of the peasants towards institutional action. Insofar as the conditions which predominated in the past are progressively disappearing, the peasants are forgetting the semi-serfdom situation of the past.

The local power groups that are taking their place increasingly in the new conditions, the multiplication of situations in which the caciques take advantage of the "errors" of the institutions, produce more and more identification between one and the other in the eyes of the peasant.

The power groups use their influence to promote the use of more and more land for cattle raising against the opposition of the peasants. Since the institution needs to conserve part of the project for agriculture, the question of what type of irrigation will be used arises, since gravity irrigation, which had been specifically planned

for the district, cannot be used because the lands cannot be levelled.

Irrigation by sprinkler, which some of the peasants are familiar with because of their work on the tobacco plantations, is rejected by them. They calculate it will be so costly that when they finish paying for it, it will be obsolete. In spite of this, the leader of the local power group recently appeared at an assembly of ejido commissioners, accompanied by a representative of Massey Ferguson, to offer all types of equipment and easy payments and tried to convince the institution representatives to buy large quantities of equipment.

In the El Gargantillo ejido where a cattle area will probably be set up, although the dimensions have not yet been decided on, the cattle cacique wants the area to be subdivided and the ejidatarios to pay a fee per head of cattle. This would make it possible for each one to put all his own cattle there. On the other hand, an important group of ejidatarios proposes that the cattle area be worked as a collective, using equal participation of each ejidatario as a credit for purchasing the animals.

It is on the basis of this type of negotiation that the peasants are defining their position vis-à-vis the institutions. Impositions and collusion with the caciques in one way or another will only emphasize the contradictions already occurring in connection with the technical and economic problems described.

3.6. NUEVO SANTIAGO: THE MODEL EJIDO

Many of the problems described above can be applied to the experience of the first ejido in which a pilot irrigation district operation was installed.

The Santiago ejido was to be partially covered by dam waters; consequently, it was decided to relocate 1,000 irrigation hectares, 480 hectares of season irrigation, and 105 hectares for the urban area

called Nuevo Santiago.

The problem of relocating the village will be presented in the following section. Here we will discuss only the problems that arose in connection with agricultural production.

Since the project for the district was not terminated in the previous P.V. cycle, and the regime of the current president was about to finish, the official institutions decided to speed up the productive process in one of the ejidos so that the project could be inaugurated. They chose Nuevo Santiago as a model ejido; an interinstitutional planning commission was formed in which SRA, BANRURAL, ANGSA, SRH, SAF, the League of Agrarian Communities, and the state government all participated. During the programming stage, all the institutions contended for recognition as promoter of the project, but in practice they all contributed to lead the ejido to failure. Although not all of the failures were negative insofar as the institutions are concerned, it must be acknowledged that, in general, whatever occurred without being directly caused by the institutions was directly a result of institutional actions. Following is a list of "unfortunate occurrences" which contributed importantly to the failure.

- The presidential resolution should have benefited 160 owners, but only included 110. The promises made by SRH to employ the others were only made effective for 30 ejidatarios.
- The socio-economic study of the Commission for Human Relations (CREHUM) under the SRH ignored the family peasant economy and estimated that the monetary income required by a family would be covered by the Bank. By omitting the non-monetary income produced by the multiple activities of a productive family unit, the economic plan of the ejidatarios was seriously affected. The COREHUM not only omitted to foresee a substitute for the supportive production activities -- which were large, dismantled with the relocation -- but also did not consider that the conditions in the new village would make it difficult for them.
- In violation of their agreement, the construction companies delivered the lands without clearing or levelling. When their efforts

were turned down to correct this situation, the peasants had to finance the contractors because the bank granted 48,000 pesos to the peasants and they had to obtain the remaining 32,000 pesos.

- The institutions imposed a system of collective work and threatened to take the land away from the peasants if they did not accept.
- The production programme proposed by the institutions consisted of 500 hectares of sorghum and 110 of sesame. The peasants, who had knowledge of local conditions, said it was impossible to achieve this unless they were given supportive irrigation. When the SRH promised to do so, the peasants accepted, but the supportive irrigation did not materialize and great crop losses were suffered.
- The Central de Maquinaria de Jose María Morelos, with which the Bank operates in the area, repeatedly failed to comply with the work and, consequently, the work was done slowly and badly, the uneven separation between the furrows causing some products to be destroyed during planting.
- The SAG unilaterally decided to experiment with a form of planting and fertilizing simultaneously. As a result the planting machine got stuck and the process was stopped. The ejidatarios financed the SAG experiments, since the input and the machine time were charged to their account.
- When a plague was reported, the bank and ANAGSA turned up after 50 hectares had been lost. In total, 340 hectares of sorghum and 110 of sesame were damaged.
- Results: the yield per hectare of sorghum was barely a ton per hectare; under traditional systems the yield is 4. In 88 hectares of sesame only 21 tons were harvested, compared with the traditional average of one ton per hectare. ANAGSA only partially assumed responsibility.
- The sorghum was chopped after the harvest and left to die before the dry season to save the cost of the tractors. Although the December rains revived the sorghum, the Bank's credit offer was rejected by the peasants, even though it could have provided for another harvest.

The feeling that this experience has left of having been defrauded adds one more loss to the others, encouraging such ideas as "the Bank

produces failure so that they can say that the peasants are incapable of producing and only the landlords and the caciques can produce." Some peasants have gone back to the money-lenders in the area.

Another problem which crops up is that, owing to the absorbing control of the institutions over the productive process, the peasants decided to sign up for work with the construction companies and send their young children - 12 or 13 years old - to work the land. The technician who was sent to check the pump motors that the bank had provided discovered that these pumps were being managed by children who, whether they knew how to use them properly or not, were subjected to accelerated carbon monoxide. The peasants had become uninterested in the production; moreover, when they were informed that the production would only yield 45,000 pesos, they openly expressed their dissatisfaction. The amount went up first to 54,000 pesos and finally to 78,000. This indicates the discrepancy between the peasant's income and the productive process.

3.7. CONCLUSION

In the analysis of the other municipalities of the coastal plains sub-region, it is possible to see that nowhere has the traditional power group been in such danger of disappearing because of modernizing agents. Notwithstanding this, the local caciques adapt themselves to the new conditions and join forces with the external actors dominated unquestionably by the government.

The form in which the local caciques find their position within the role assigned to them in the "totalizing plan" of the government indicates that they are willing to assume this role only insofar as they can obtain privileges which will allow them to obtain profits similar to those they have been obtaining, and only on these conditions will they change their traditional resistance to modernization. The experience with the new capitalistic producers - for instance, in the Adolfo Ruiz Cortines colony where some producers have soldiers working and watching over their plots - reconfirms the concept that outsiders

coming in as private owners will look for the same type of privileges and will be equally unwilling to produce food for national requirements.

On the other hand, as long as the role assigned to the peasants within the "totalizing plan" is imposed on them, they will reject it and will confront the institutions that try to impose it. The institutions will have to demonstrate that they are capable of promoting a "from-the-bottom-up" process in which the peasants will participate, as well as trying to establish objectives for the district which will at least not clash with the peasant groups or promote the dismantling of their living conditions, the polarization within the ejidos, or the total proletarianizing of the ejidatarios. Should other agents lead the peasants to bankruptcy, the peasants will consider that the state, as the initiator and controlling element within the district, is the cause.

Finally, another challenge for institutional action consists in trying to establish an adequate role for labourers. There is a basic need to solve the problems resulting from the temporary or irregular demand for labour. This is a question that has to be faced by an outsider agent who wants to help the community groups by looking for solutions to some of the technological aspects of the problematic situation described here. To ignore the situation can only result in developing options which, in the best of cases, will be irrelevant for those community groups or even negative.

The dialogic approach on which this project is based has permitted the researchers of the MAYA group to participate in the search for solutions to the problems that arise in connection with relocating the village of Nahuapa.

4. COMMUNITY GENERATION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND URBANISTIC SOLUTIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE IMPOSITION OF INADEQUATE FORMULAS

An analysis is made in this section of the relocation of the villages of Santiago and Nahuapa. The first part, dedicated to Santiago, is only a description of a negative experience of the mechanical application of architectural and urbanistic solutions that are evidently inadequate to the community. In this case, the research group merely gathered information and analysed it; this is presented as a point of reference for the Nahuapan process which is analysed in the second part.

The second part contains a description and analysis of the process of designing and constructing the village of Nuevo Nahuapa, where the community, on the basis of their possibilities and needs, used their own knowledge and resources to develop an efficient and adequate solution in contrast with the other experiences.

In this process, the research group developed a deeper community interaction, which consisted in supporting community efforts to find solutions for the architectural and urbanistic alternatives. Although it was not necessary to develop technological research in a strict sense, it is important to point out that the existing knowledge and solutions had to be adapted to the specific conditions and to the socio-economic restrictions present in the problematic situation that the community group faces.

4.1. NUEVO SANTIAGO

4.1.1. *The Community*¹⁶

Santiago is an ejido in the Tomatlan municipality, which is close to

the area where the Cajon de Peñas Dam is being built. When this project becomes operative, approximately one-third of the land and the village will be covered by water; in the case of this ejido, not only did the agrarian lands have to be relocated within the irrigation district but their village itself had to be relocated as well.

The necessity of relocating the village and the impossibility to continue cultivating their lands which were affected from the start by the construction work turned Santiago into a "pilot ejido" in the irrigation district. In May 1976 the ejidatarios were transferred to another village, Nuevo Santiago, built by the SRH. In the same seasonal cycle, using bank credits and machinery, they started work in a collective on 600 hectares of recently cleared land. In this manner they were ahead of many other communities that continue in their old settlements and are cultivating their old lands with traditional resources and organization.

4.1.2. The Transfer to Nuevo Santiago Village

The conditions under which the Santiago ejidatarios abandoned their old village and were transferred to a new settlement and the characteristics of this new settlement are determined by the general process of the group. The rapid process of modernization, which is development of the area for this group of peasants, signifies a loss of control over the peasants' own destiny. After a first phase in which they are able to negotiate some of their demands with the institutions by acting in co-ordination with other groups and through the Ejido Union, the Santiago group is overwhelmed by the institutional pressures and ends up submitting to outside decisions which, in a majority of cases, are contrary to their interests. In these decisions the opinion of the group is not taken into account, so the rationale of the process corresponds to the unilateral interests of the outside agents.

We have seen how the group is pushed into a negative agricultural experience. Now we will analyse relocating the village, a process which develops along the same lines.

The original settlement was erected on fairly adequate and almost level land. The climate was not as hot as in other parts of the area and the wind was not too strong. Another advantage was that it bordered humid or good seasonal lands with extensive pasture lands nearby. Finally, there was easy access to places for fishing and hunting.

Before the construction of the Puerto-Vallarta-Barra de Navidad highway and the dam, communication between the village and the other communities in the region was bad. These conditions improved considerably later when a byway was built leading to the dam.

The village of Santiago, as is the case with all the small villages in the region, had no electricity, drainage, or running water.

The houses were built along traditional lines: a large room with a high roof, many openings for ventilation, local materials, wood (branches) for walls, and a palm (palapa) roof.

There were about 80 houses well spaced out from one another. Each house was surrounded by a good-sized piece of land where some families had orchards and vegetable gardens. Most houses had small buildings - barns, pigsties, and chicken roosts - to house their animals.

When the community learned that their village and part of their lands would be covered with water, they discussed and proposed a place for their new location. The place they proposed was fairly close by at a crossing known as El Caiman between the road to the dam and the Las Animas stream. It had obvious advantages for the community: the land that was not to be covered by the dam was close to the site; and irrigation lands would be close by as soon as the district started operating. They requested a location by the roadside, with abundant water, and with a climate similar to that of their previous settlement.

However, the decision of the institution representatives was different from that of the peasants. The place chosen by the representatives

and imposed upon these ejidatarios supposedly offered many advantages, such as being high up, windy, and therefore cool.¹⁷

It took a long time for the institutions to convince the community. Social workers from the Commission of Human Relations of the SRH worked from 1973 with the group. They passed out questionnaires and did research. However, all of their work was not intended to take into account the opinion of the community but rather to convince themselves that the decision taken by the institutions was adequate and that the only concern was to get out of the area in time so that they would not be in the way of the dam construction.

At first the peasants were resistant not only because they had their own proposal but also because they distrusted the institutions and feared that with the change to such a distant place they would lose the land they had left, the pastures, and other natural resources such as the fishing, hunting, wood, and palapa, which were abundant nearby.

Another argument against the change to the place assigned was the cost of changing and building a new village which, according to the institution's plan, the community could not afford. The SRH was able to find an adequate formula in relation to this point, and this turned out to be a strong pressure point to get the Santiago ejidatarios to accept the change in the conditions proposed by the government institution.

There was wood on the ejido land and also some important banks of clay which the companies wanted to use for the dam construction. In exchange for these resources, and for the lands which would be flooded, the institution agreed to give the ejido a *completely finished village* with houses for all the families and total urbanization, if they agreed to accept the location proposed by the SRH.

Other important elements in convincing the community were the spectacular promises and the appearance of improvement implicit in them. They were told that the new village would have drainage, a water

system, electricity, a school, a village square, a market, a community house, telephones, a telegraph, and a bus terminal. Finally they were shown a model three-bedroom house built of brick and concrete and having a roof made of shingles. This was a great contrast with their wood and palapa houses.

Overwhelmed by a project that appeared to represent a spectacular improvement over their present living conditions, the Santiago ejidatarios accepted the SRH proposal; their enthusiasm, apparently well based, carried them to the extreme of discussing which of the peasants would occupy the model house.

To have achieved the "voluntary" acceptance of the community may seem to be a demonstration of good promotion and conscience raising. Unfortunately, it is quite the opposite. In fact, the critical and analytic capacity of the members of the community was blunted by the promise of a considerable number of satisfiers whose value and importance could not easily be judged by peasants who had no previous experience on the subject. What the ejidatarios did do was to present their own project, which was right for their possibilities and was based on experience gained in their past living conditions. But their project was underestimated. Instead of the institutional action being based on the interests of the peasants trying to rationalize and instrument their spontaneous projects using their technological resources and urbanistic knowledge adapted to the region, ejidatarios substituted the community project for a foreign project and added "glitter" to make it palatable. As we shall see later, the result was negative not only for the community but also for the institutions that invested a great deal of money and resources to create a village which, as experience has shown, is inadequate for peasant requirements.

4.1.3. The Characteristics of the New Village and Its Deficiencies

The first problem is the location of the Nueva Santiago settlement. The site on the top of a small hill with many different levels makes urbanization difficult. This, however, is secondary to the problem of

the climate; since the place is extremely hot, it is assumed this is compensated by the strong winds that blow there. But the village is very hot when there is no wind, and when the wind does blow, it is so strong that it damages the buildings. The ejidatarios are afraid, with reason, that if this occurs in normal conditions, a hurricane — and there are frequently hurricanes in the area — may completely destroy the village. A small detail completes the picture: the place is swamped with mosquitoes.

The streets are well planned and covered with gravel. However, due to the different levels, they are so steep that when it rains the water carries away the gravel and destroys them. Shortly after they moved to their new village, the ejidatarios found their streets full of potholes. In the case of Nuevo Nahuapa, the ejidatarios built their own village and they themselves keep up their streets. In Nuevo Santiago, however, the ejidatarios have insisted that the constructors repair the streets, which they have had to do on several occasions.

The first problem that came up had to do with the number of houses. The peasants expected at least 110 houses, one for each recognized ejidatario, but SRH was only willing to give them 74. The rest of the ejidatarios received only a piece of land and had to build their houses with their own resources.

The lots of land are 800 square metres; the houses are made of brick and cement and have shingles on the roofs. The ejidatarios with families of six or more members have three bedrooms; other ejidatarios have two or only one bedroom, although a house can be enlarged as a family increases.

At first sight the houses are well planned and fresh; they have high roofs and numerous apertures for ventilation. However, this advantage becomes a serious disadvantage as soon as the wind blows — which happens often — because the shingles fly off and roofs are damaged.

When there is rain instead of wind, the shingles, which are made of

cement and sand, absorb water and drip because apparently they were made without enough cement. All the families have had to use household money to replace a good many shingles. A way to prevent the problems caused by wind and rain has not been found.

In spite of the deficiencies, the houses are expensive; according to the SRH, they are valued at 80,000 pesos. In comparison, the houses being built by the ejidatarios who only received the land are costing about 40,000 pesos because of savings on outside labour. These houses are not so spectacular to look at and in comparison may seem ugly, but their owners say that the roofs do not fly off when there is wind and the rain does not drip in.

As to the services offered, the SRH put in running water, a drainage system, the village square, and a school. However, although the new village was inaugurated in 1976, it still has no electricity, telephone, telegraph, or even postal service. The market and the community house have not been built.

An inadequate location, streets that have deteriorated from the rain, insufficient and badly built houses, and noncompliance with promises of light, market, and community house, are all serious deficiencies, especially since the village with 74 houses cost 3 million pesos. However, these problems are secondary and refer only to details. The real problem of Nuevo Santiago lies in the design and construction of this village without having taken into account the socio-economic considerations of the families that occupy it.

We have mentioned that the family economy of the Santiago ejidatarios was diversified, based on agriculture as well as small-scale cattle raising, fishing, and hunting.

The reproduction conditions of this economy defined the urbanistic logic of the previous location which was adequate for their needs. The project which the community designed for relocation to El Caiman followed the same logic and would probably have been just as adequate.

Without taking into consideration broken promises and technical deficiencies, the institutional project follows a supposedly universal urbanistic model. There are slight variations in the climatic conditions of the location and these have nothing to do with the socio-economic conditions of the inhabitants. Even though the village was located in a place where there are lands which, according to the plans, will be donated to the ejidatarios, no consideration was given to the requirements of the peasant settlements for housing, communication, trade, and amusement units and also for places where important economic activities can take place.

In old Santiago, the size of the lots of land, their spacing, housing construction, etc., was adapted to the important functions of family or livestock breeding. The characteristics of Nuevo Santiago practically prevent the possibilities of domestic animal husbandry. In the 800-square-metre lots there was space for pigsties, barns, and chicken coops, but in the new village the animals have to be fed with purchased grain and in pastures. The chickens and pigs in the old village kept the lots "clean"; in the new village these functions are organized in other ways. Moreover, there are no natural pastures or grasslands for big cattle in the new village.

The small-scale domestic cattle breeding in Santiago village was useful because it did not represent monetary disbursement; in the new conditions, where the cattle must be kept in stables, the ejidatarios cannot afford the cost of feed. The only way this type of cattle breeding could be profitable would be with good quality cattle in large-scale production units, but the peasants of Nuevo Santiago are in no condition to make such a radical change in the cattle economy.

There are other subjective, and even aesthetic, considerations to add to these objective indications of inadequacy. In old Santiago the pigs and chickens ran loose, the lots of land had only a few head of cattle, and pasture and grain deposits were part of the scenery. In the new village the urban characteristics are not compatible with pigs and chickens running loose on the sidewalks, and the improvised barns give

an ugly appearance to houses which are more urban than rural. Naturally, these aesthetic considerations, although important to the inhabitants of the village, take second place when contrasted with economic urgencies; consequently, the majority of the families have built wood and palapa additions which they call *chipotes* (lumps) to fulfil their basic social functions. The contrast between these "lumps" and the SRH houses dramatizes the conflictive co-existence of two different socio-economic considerations.

4.1.4. Conclusion

The contradiction between the peasant rationale and the institutional rationale is not only in the urbanistic and service concepts. The root of the problem really is the total logic of the modernization process promoted by the institutions in the area.

As we have seen in the first sections, the process has developed basically from the top down in an irrational way. The previous socio-economic conditions are being supplanted by others, and the institutions have failed to assimilate the peasants' desire to participate actively in this transformation process. In the case of Santiago, the two conceptions relating to the relocation of the village are only one aspect of the general confrontation that exists between the logic of this ejidatario group and that of institutions whose principal manifestation is in economic organization. The dismantling of the previously existing economic balance to substitute it for a failed project, as in the case of the collective cultivation of 600 hectares, is a dramatic example of what can be expected in the future if this confrontation continues to be favourable to the unilateral projects of the institutions.

Nor is it valid to object to the criticism of the new village because its urbanistic conception is adequate for the new economic condition which the ejidatarios will presumably acquire when the irrigation district is inaugurated and their agriculture is modernized. These objections are not valid since they conceive of the transformation of

the agricultural and cattle-raising economy of the area as a simple result of the construction of the infrastructure to be imposed directly and without transition. The disastrous effects of this conception can be seen in other similar projects; in Cajon de Peñas, the agricultural experiences of the pilot ejido of Santiago are quite evident. The policy of urbanization can definitely not be justified by its coherence with the general development policy, since this is also proving inadequate.

If the institutions have made a big investment in the construction of Nuevo Santiago with results that are far from satisfactory, the thousand times greater investments being made in the irrigation district run the risk of having the same defects, precisely because the policy that produced the urbanistic project and the general regional development policy are coherent with each other and are both inadequate.

4.2. NUEVO NAHUAPA

4.2.1. *The Community*

Nahuapa, a small community of farmers, belongs to the Tomatlan municipality and is located near the municipal centre. The land which the farmers cultivate lies in the area recognized by the Tomatlan Community. The legal ownership, which has undergone some changes, has not yet been defined completely. At present the Nahuapa farmers are recognized as an extension of the community, but there is a request for ejido recognition pending for them.

The Nahuapa lands are within the area which corresponds to the first stage of the irrigation district which is soon to go into operation. At present the land is seasonal or humid; some small portions are susceptible to irrigation from the Tomatlan river.

4.2.2. *The Community before the Modernization Process in the Area*

Although it originally came from an old town that was destroyed in a

flood, the Nahuapan community is of fairly recent origin. The first group of inhabitants were a few cowboys from the ex-hacienda that controlled the land in the area at the top of a hill. People from other parts of the region — Tomatlan, Piloto, Union de Tula, etc. — and later from Colima and Guerrero began to settle around this first group.

By 1948 the inhabitants of Nahuara were still very few, and their situation was similar to that described in section 1 of this study. A few worked as peons in the Gargantillo hacienda. Others were cowboys working for the big cattle landlords.

The majority worked on small plots of less than 6 hectares that were located within the hacienda lands. These plots were usually granted on an associate basis, and the farmers had to clean, clear, and fence them. Ideally the peasant was to become the owner of the plot, and frequently he agreed with the hacienda owner to buy the plot after two or three years of preparing it for plough cultivation. However, just as frequently, the owner refused to sell and took over the land that had been improved by the peasant's work or else continued to let the peasant use it but always on an associate basis.

Nevertheless, some of the peasants had managed to buy their own land at 2,000 or 3,000 pesos, paid in sort (grain and animals); others had acquired rights in the Tomatlan Community. But none of these escaped from the control of the landlords, since they had to go into debt to work their plots, and they sold their corn and cattle only to these landlords. In general, the credits were also in kind; one of the most common interest rates was called *maiz parido* (born corn) whereby for each sack of seed loaned two and even three sacks were repaid. The landlords considered they had an inalienable right to freely dispose of the peasants' corn and bean by-products. Besides the practice already described, there were occasions when the peasants looked after a small herd of cattle for the landlord in exchange for milk.

In 1950, and for two years or so, the Banco de Credito Agricola generated expectations of changes in the working population. Eventually

the Bank granted credits for fattening the cattle and especially started to help some groups to cultivate corn and beans. In Nahuapa three groups of 14 persons each were formed, and during two agricultural cycles they were able to break away from the money-lenders. However, the expectation did not last long, because a strong river current flooded many of the cultivated lots and the insurance failed to cover the damage or reimburse the peasants who — some of them with total losses — had to pay back the bank. Some paid and others did not, but the majority wanted nothing more to do with the Bank. Finally, the Bank left the area.

After this failure, the Nahuapa peasants re-established relations of dependence with the landlords and went back to the maiz parido and other traditional practices. The experience left them with a deep distrust for official credit institutions and a few empty pockets.

After a few years of being more or less permanently in possession of some of the lands, the Nahuapa peasants decided to put in agrarian requests. They were supported by the immigrants from Colima and Michoacan, where there is a traditional struggle for land. On 14 May 1963 they registered their request for land through the New Centre of Ejido Population (Nuevo Centro de Población Ejidal).

The papers were processed but no response was made because the lands were located within the territory claimed by the Tomatlan Community which was controlled by a group of caciques who also controlled the municipal presidency.

However, although the Nahuapa request was blocked, the request by the community which was started later did obtain results, and in 1970 a presidential resolution was made and put into effect in 1976. To illustrate the corrupt practices of the group controlling the Indian Community, it is sufficient to indicate that from 1970 to 1976 the number of community members grew from 330 to 770 and in practically every case the newcomer had to pay a large sum of money to the commissioner. When the rumour started that there was going to be an

irrigation district in the area and that it would benefit some 11,000 hectares of the community, the interest in land increased and the real community members -- poor farmers -- were slowly displaced by new "Indians" who lived in Guadalajara and even in the United States and came to the general assemblies in big new automobiles.

Another one of the Tomatlan cacique deals consists in manipulating credits for planting tobacco. This is controlled by a small group of people who do not cultivate the land but who make credits available at enormous interest to the poor commoners who are virtually hired hands under these conditions.

In these conditions it was logical that the group in charge of administrating the collective assets of the Indian Community should put up resistance to the independent groups and more so to the creation of independent ejidos such as Nahuapa, which was established on lands that they consider their own.

The conflicts and negotiations with the commissariat of the community have been a fundamental part of the existence of the Nahuapa group ever since this group put in its request, and in a short time they became the principal contradiction of the group, relegating to second place the problems with the cattle landlords. In the modernization phase of the area, which was a rapid process that began in the early seventies and became critical after 1974, the old landlords retreated, but the community caciques started an offensive with the purpose of controlling the new situation as much as possible. In the context of this offensive, the Nahuapa group had to fight for its existence.

4.2.3. *The Community after 1974*

The changes that took place in Nahuapa after 1974 are threefold: the legal ownership of the land, the organization of the group in connection with agricultural production, and the relocation of the village. Here we will deal with the first two problems and leave the third for the next section.

With respect to land ownership, the Nahuara group was obliged to change its tactics, owing to the joint pressure of the caciques and the agrarian authorities in collusion with the former. Because their agrarian request received no response, since priority had been given to the community even though their request had been later than the Nahuapa group's, this group started negotiations with the commissioner in October 1973; by May 1974, an agreement was reached to the effect that they would be considered an extension of the Community. Thirty-three peasants were recognized at once and 115 persons remain pending recognition at a later date.

For the Nahuapa group the agreement constitutes an alternative in view of a correlation of forces which is temporarily unfavourable to them, because while the cacique group of Tomatlan remains in power their situation as commoners will be unstable. For the caciques the agreement is merely a way of weakening the group; as soon as it is signed they will begin to violate it. The commissioner gave the Nahuapa land to new commoners, and the group suffers all sorts of threats and pressures. Finally, at the end of 1974, it was discovered that Nahuapa is being considered in the distribution of land of the irrigation district, and the expectations of the group were renewed. Actually at present there is a possibility that Nahuapa will revive the old request for Nuevo Centro de Población Ejidal, even if this can only be defined when the community lands are compacted for relocation within the irrigation district.

The peasant economy that prevails in the area is the family type; there are very few forms of association between domestic units, and there is practically no tradition of collective work, not even work for common benefit. Since this is a community constituted by immigrant people, there is no tradition of common work as in the "tequios" and "faginas" which persist in the old settlements. These regional characteristics are reproduced inside the Nahuapa group, and precisely because of this relatively individualistic tradition of family agriculture, the effort made to develop forms of collective organization in production is all the more outstanding.

It is important to point out that these efforts to constitute associative forms in the agricultural work do not respond to outside impositions, as often happens since the official bank adopted the model of collective organization as a panacea to increase the efficiency of the peasants. Not only does the economic organization of the Nahuapa group not respond to an arbitrary outside formula, but their association for production can only be explained as the result of a long process of group action in trying to get legal ownership of the land.

In 1973 the group presented a request for credit which was rejected. But in 1974, after being partially recognized as commoners of Tomatlan, 33 members of the group in the Local Society of Ejido Credit obtained bank financing for the dry season 1974-1975. The official credit, thanks to the organization of the group, is negotiated in fairly good terms with the bank. The peasants participated directly in the selection and purchase of a tractor, a station wagon, and irrigation equipment. They are able to have the costs calculated on a reality basis and, finally, the peasants have regained control over their organization as well as over the technical production decisions, thereby avoiding the traditional imposition of the bank officers.

During the first agricultural cycle, the organization of the group, based on self-management and democracy, manages to overcome the problems caused by lack of punctuality on the part of the bank as well as by the effects of excessive rains and floods. In general, the experience is a success.

In the following cycles, however, the relation with the bank begin to deteriorate. From the time of distributing the profits from the first harvest, the bank officer imposed his criterion without taking the partners into account. Later, the tractor had defects and the bank failed to support the peasants in their pressure on the tractor company; and finally there was a long struggle before the bank admitted that the group could hire out services with the machinery outside the Society, in spite of showing that without this they are underoccupied.

These conflicts with the credit institution became complicated when the Tomatlan caciques started a campaign to get hold of the credit and the machines, claiming that the lands belong to the community, in complicity with the bank. Finally, the situation reached a crisis when the caciques and the bank managed to divide the Society and carry with them a small minority of partners. Today the group has a new negative remembrance of working with the official credit institutions and its distrust for these institutions has grown.

The way in which the families in the group achieve their socio-economic reproduction at present is determined by the problems of land ownership — which is expressed in the limited availability of cultivation lands — and in the negative results of their relation with the bank, which is attested to by the fact that at present only 12 partners continue to work on credit. For the rest, this is a transition situation and its position will be cleared up definitely when the irrigation district goes into operation.

The group consists of approximately 150 families who subsist on the basis of a diversified economic activity. The majority of the adult men work as temporary wage labourers in the construction companies of the irrigation district. When they are able to get contracts, they earn wages from 60 to 120 pesos a day depending upon the work; when they work by day, they can make as much as 70 to 200 pesos, according to the job assigned and the capacity of the worker. In general the work in the companies is combined on a temporary basis with agricultural labour: tobacco crops, planting, harvesting, and so forth. The daily wage for these activities is 50 to 70 pesos, but they can earn a bit more by working by the job.

Besides working for wages, an important sector of the group rents land or works it on an association basis. Only 25 families cultivate land on their old plots along the banks of the Tomatlan River.

This last group cultivates chiefly corn and beans and harvests two crops a year to cover the requirements of family consumption with a

bit left over occasionally for selling. The 12 people who still get credits from the bank belong to this group.

Finally, nearly all the families hunt and fish up to four times a month and this provides them with additional assets for their own consumption.

In general terms, the economy of the community depends as much on wage labour — agriculture and construction — as on the cultivation of their own or rented lands. In some families wage labour predominates over the subsistence agricultural activity, while in others — especially those who have a plot — working for themselves in agriculture predominates. However, in almost all the cases there is a combination in different proportions of the two types of income. Obviously this equilibrium is temporary, since the relative abundance of wage labour structure works in process in the area. In fact, the possibilities of hiring out are already decreasing, because of both the considerable affluence of additional population and a decrease in the intensity of the construction works after 1977.

4.2.4. The Struggle for Relocation of the Village

Nuevo Nahuapan is a new settlement created after a long struggle which culminated in the implementation of an old unfulfilled agreement.

The village is built practically with the resources and on the initiative of the inhabitants, and its configuration is inseparable from the process of negotiations and confrontations in which the Nahuapa group is involved. Both are in connection with land ownership and the organization for production as well as with respect to the relocation of the village. Here we will describe the struggle for the change in location of the settlement; later we will analyse the characteristics of the urbanization of Nuevo Nahuapa.

The old settlement of the Nahuapa group was constituted spontaneously around the place which the landlord assigned to a group of labourers. The village grew in a disorganized fashion as newcomers arrived, and

its physical location on the irregular surface of a small hill helped to produce an irrational and dispersed structure. Finally, the proximity to the river constituted a permanent threat, and the village had been destroyed in a flood once already.

The village, as in the case of others in the area, lacked running water and had neither drainage nor electricity. Before 1974 the old village of Nahuapa had no communication with other settlements in the area, but after 1974, with the inauguration of the Puerto Vallarta-Barra de Navidad highway, communication lines began to be established in connection with the highway and the distance to it. Nahuapa was two kilometres from the highway, and there was no transportation service established along this route.

It was in connection with the possibility of having a more expedite communication system that the Nahuapa group began to consider relocating the village along the edge of the highway. The old village, due to its disorganized form, held no attraction to retain the group in the original settlement.

Another important factor in selecting the site of the new settlement was the proximity to 10,000 hectares of uncultivated lands controlled by cattle landlords who had abandoned them when the irrigation district infrastructure began to be built. Although several "influential" persons (especially General Bonifacio Salinas Leal and General Amaya Rodríguez) have an interest in these lands, at present they are not being used. When the district starts operating they will become irrigation lands which could be granted to the Nahuapa group. The possibility of requesting these lands, close to the new settlement, was important in the choice of location. The distance to the lands which they presently cultivate is irrelevant, since both the villages are approximately the same distance from the plots.

Finally, another important consideration in the choice of the site was the possibility of obtaining water, light, etc. Since Nuevo Nahuapa borders with the settlement of Pino Suarez, the official institutions

have promised to give priority to these services for settlements that are fairly large and located along the edge of the highway.

In summary, the decision to change the location of Nahuara village and the choice of the new location corresponds first to gaining access to the new highway and second to the proximity of uncultivated lands which the group wants to obtain. Another factor is the possibility of obtaining utility services in the fairly near future. The absence of these services and the disorganization and lack of attractive features of the old village neutralizes the possible resistance determined by customs of tradition.¹⁸

As part of the negotiations with the commissioner of the Tomatlan Indian Community in trying to get the land claims recognized, the Nahuapa group also requested that authorization be granted to move their village in front of the Jose Maria Pino Suarez village along the highway. In June 1974 the community accepted the request, and on this basis Nahuapa requested 156 lots of land, which is the number of families who consider they have a right to land either by being recognized as the New Centre for Ejido Population or as commoners. The Tomatlan commissioner only wanted to grant 33 lots, which corresponds to the number of peasants already recognized as commoners, and refused to authorize lots for the other families pending recognition.

In the process of negotiations, Nahuapan was forced to reduce its request to 84 lots, which corresponded to the number of people actively interested in moving the village. But the community was adamant on the offer of 33 lots. The unity of the group, resulting from their coordinated actions in every field and particularly in connection with their struggle to obtain ownership of the land, is expressed when it is decided that nobody — neither the recognized nor the as yet unrecognized commoners — would accept land unless all were granted lots.

After 1974 the relations between Nahuapan and the Community became more difficult, since the Tomatlan caciques continually violated the agreements. This was the case with the relocation, since granting lots to

only one-fifth of the Nahuapa inhabitants evidently was unacceptable. After numerous appeals to the authorities, the Nahuapa group decided to unilaterally make the agreement effective and they took possession of their urban lots, thus foiling the Tomatlan caciques' plan to take over the land which they had already agreed to sell at 9,000 pesos per lot to other peasants and business people.

The Nahuapa group reached an agreement at a general assembly and on the next day took possession of their new urban area; they were supported by the ejidatarios from other groups who also had problems with the Tomatlan caciques and who belonged to the same ejido union. The presence of 400 people who immediately started to measure out their lots and build their houses and the decision to hold on to their new lands — showing the strength with which the group intended to stay in their new settlement — counteracted the caciques' efforts to get them out by bringing in biased officials who tried to pressure the group into leaving their new lots, threatening arrests and army intervention, and using aggression by the president of the community commissariat (who is also the mayor of Tomatlan) assisted by a group of commoners brought in by him. All to no avail. After a week in which the situation was tense and there was constant danger of violence, the hostile group was forced to accept the legality of the action and withdrew, leaving the Nahuapa group in possession of their lots.

The creation of Nuevo Nahuapa not only responds to a spontaneous initiative on the part of its inhabitants but also is the result of a long process during which many obstacles had to be overcome. It combines several forms of struggle, from a simple request to negotiation to direct action. In this process the decision of the group, instead of weakening, became stronger and was reinforced by the solidarity of the group members.

Without taking into account this historical perspective, it is impossible to understand the logic of the urbanization actions of the Nuevo Nahuapan inhabitants. Moreover, without taking into account this historic process, the differences between this village and other urban units designed by outside agents would be purely formal.

4.2.5. *The Construction of Nuevo Nahuapa*

At the time when the agreements were signed between Nahuapa and the Tomatlan community regarding the relocation of the village, the SRH agreed to build the village and give it basic services. However, from the moment the Nahuapa group had to take possession of the lots by force, the SRH backed down on its promises and the community had to undertake the job of designing and building the village.

Actually, the responsibility for building their village did not take the Nahuapa group by surprise. Their previous experiences with the institutions had already produced distrust in the villagers. As far back as 1974, when it was decided to relocate the village, the majority of the families started to save money foreseeing that they would basically have to finance their own relocation.

As in all their actions, the first step taken by the group was to have a collective discussion regarding the characteristics of their new settlement. The general assemblies decided how the streets were to be planned and the lots divided into 600-square-metre plots per family.

After the lots were assigned and the streets marked on the terrain, the members of the group started working collectively on levelling and compacting the streets, allowing two metres for sidewalks. Trees were planted alongside the sidewalks and protected with wooden crates.

Later on the members periodically participated in the work of constructing new streets and maintaining the old ones; in two cases they have successfully negotiated with construction companies to allow them to use the machinery during idle time at very low rates or even for free.

Finally, space was assigned for collective use such as a square to be used both by Nahuapa and Pino Suarez and the community house. A large wooden barn built to be used as a school until replaced by a better building is being used temporarily as a meeting house and a chapel.

The construction of houses is done with the resources, ideas, and labour of the families and uses local materials.

In the majority of the cases, the family first built a provisional room with light materials (wood, cardboard, etc.) on one of the corners of the lot in order to leave room for the final construction. This began as soon as the family was able to gather enough resources to build with stronger materials.

The family labour was also used for building the final buildings, but two or three persons from the community are often hired because they have some knowledge of masonry, carpentry, or some skill useful for construction. When more or less specialized persons are hired, the family acts as assistants to these persons. In some cases the families start to build without hiring anyone and simply get information on how to do it from someone who has already built or has some experience.

In every case, brick, cement, iron, and local materials such as stone, gravel, and sand obtained from nearby deposits are sought. Using the local resources and the predominant or exclusive participation of the family labour, it has been possible to keep costs extremely low; consequently, a few months after relocation most of the inhabitants already had houses in the process of construction.

Most of the houses have two or three rooms, according to the resources and the needs of each family, and one of these rooms is used as a drawing room, dining room, and kitchen. Since there is no drainage of running water, all the houses have a sewage ditch (*fosa séptica*) and a water deposit.

Although the architectural design was created by each family to their own taste and needs, there is a certain similarity which comes from the constructive participation of the local "specialists." Therefore, many houses have similar façades, doors, and windows, and the majority have followed the same designs for the distribution of space.

For collective services, the Nuevo Nahuapa members have followed the same system they have used to solve other problems: be self-sufficient and negotiate collectively when the solution depends upon an official institution.

Health services are a good example of this procedure. The community does not have a health centre, and the closest is a rural clinic five kilometres away that is next to the CONASURO storehouses. The community has requested a clinic for the village. However, all they have obtained so far are promises, so they have decided to face the problem on their own.

The community invited an empirical doctor to come to the village, and the group worked together to build a small clinic. This doctor attends the villagers, charges very low fees, and gives medicinal samples. The village doctor is more honest and capable than many authorized doctors and is aware of his level of knowledge. When he is unable to treat a case, he sends the patient to a clinic with indications of the diagnosis. Quite often the patient comes back to the village doctor because of the poor service received at the other clinic.

Education has also been a matter of negotiations and collective work. At first, the municipal president of Tomatlan and some of the education department inspectors whom he controls tried to prevent a school from being built in the community. However, the inhabitants of the village made a request to the president of the republic and they finally got authorization to build an elementary school. The six-room school was built with help from the CAPECF, the state government, and the community. A kindergarten was recently started as well as an adult education school at the request of the ejidatarios. There is also a project to establish a technical school.

The community is now requesting electric light service. There are two alternatives for obtaining electricity: a direct connection with the Tomatlan cable or with the SRH camp which has two power plants, or a future connection to the high voltage lines that are being built in the

area and which are already fairly close to Nuevo Nahuapa (one already reaches El Tuito; the other is at Campo Acosta, which is 15 kilometres from the village).

After several discussions, the community decided to turn down the apparently easier and faster solution of connecting with the Tomatlan or the SRH camp. Both are weak lines with frequent interruptions and failures; furthermore, connection would require future investments. Instead, the community prefers to wait to be connected to high voltage lines that guarantee better service and, in the long run, lower costs.

Nahuapa has no church and the religious services that take place once in a while are in the collective barn where the assemblies take place. The priest of the village has presented a project prepared by an architect for a very pretentious and elaborate church. The villagers have responded indifferently or are openly against it not because they are not religious or do not want a church in their village, but simply because the project is beyond their means and their needs and therefore would be out of place.

The church, like the government institutions, has found that the villagers of Nueva Nahuapa are not willing to accept outside projects that do not correspond to their rhythm and degree of development, especially if they have to invest their scarce resources and divert them from more urgent requirements.

Small-scale trade is in the hands of some of the families who have set up small stores in their houses. These families sell food, soft drinks, beer, and other domestic necessities and buy on credit from the large stores in the city.

In the urban area the Nahuapa group has come in conflict with the owners of large city stores. These owners have tried for some years to control the highway trade and monopolize the growing demand in the more accessible parts of the area. These merchants are important members of the local power group and they exert influence on the

Commissioner of Community Goods who belongs to the same group. These merchants were among those opposed to the Nahuapa group relocating its village to the lots which they wanted to hold to prevent competition. The most outstanding persons in this group are four merchants who sell construction materials and all kinds of food and drink. They each have storehouses and constructions worth more than one-half million pesos.

In all the aspects we have discussed up to now, the relocation and construction of Nuevo Nahuapa has been the result of the initiative of the villagers; all the action and work has been based on their own collective resources. The role of the representatives of the institutions and the local authorities has been hostile to the group or, in the best of cases, neutral. The result has been a new village rationally designed and rapidly built and at a low cost. The community identifies with the services achieved through its own efforts and participation, which guarantees not only their technical efficiency but also their social rationality, and consequently their full use. The quality of the villagers' life has improved not only because they have obtained new means of satisfaction but also because these have been the result of their own development and the expression of their own goals and interests.

However, not all the self-generated urbanization processes have been freely achieved; in some areas, the situation is conflictive and runs the risk of a confrontation between the community and the representatives of the institutions. This is the case of the water service mentioned in the following section.

4.2.6. *Running Water*

In an initial phase, the question of running or drinking water was faced by the Nahuapan group in the usual manner: find their own solutions adequate to their needs and possibilities.

After several assemblies where the different possibilities were discussed, the group decided that the most viable solution was to build

a well in the substratum of a stream near the village. Once this agreement was reached, the villagers made a collection and organized to participate with their work in digging the well.

After four weeks of labour, the well was 12 metres deep and produced enough water to supply the present needs of the village. Since then, the well has been washed twice, through the collective work of the villagers, to keep it clean.

The well was a first step towards solving the problem of running water. However, the villagers do not feel it is sufficiently satisfactory, since the water has to be brought up from the well and boiled or disinfected to guarantee its purity. Consequently, they decided to go to SRH since it had promised the construction of a village with all its services since 1974. They were not asking the SRH to find a solution to the problem, since the community had already resolved it basically. What they wanted was assistance to extend the already existing service and especially to set up a purification system. The cost was estimated at 30,000 pesos.

At first, their request received no reply, but finally the new SAHOP made a counterproposal. The project was much more important than requested and consisted of bringing water from a stream two kilometres away through filtering ducts or tubing. The installation was to supply not only Nahuapa but also Piño Suarez and other small communities in the area. For the SAHOP project, both villages had to raise 90,000 pesos.

This was not the group's original proposition and in principle it was not satisfactory, especially considering its high cost. But since the SAHOP representatives were adamant, the villagers had to accept.

At present the peasants have raised the major part of the quantity requested: 55,000 pesos. But not even one-fifth of the project has been finished: the well has to be finished; the gallery for the filtering duct has not been constructed; the network has not been put in; and

the pipes and pumps have still not been brought to the area.

This was only the beginning of the problem, because finally the work was suspended owing to changes in the SAHOP policy. The villagers still have not been adequately informed of these changes, although there are rumours that a centre for rural concentration is to be built where Nuevo Nahuapan and Piño Suarez are now located; the water works which were to supply the needs of a few hundred people will have to be calculated now for 10,000 inhabitants.

Although they have not been told what the new policies and plans are, the villagers have been told that the waterworks will cost 3 million pesos, and for a service that required only a simple system of purification, they will now have to pay 1.2 million pesos.

The Nuevo Nahuapan villagers refused to accept the new conditions and have demanded explanations. The answer was simple and direct: "The job will be done whether you like it or not, a committee will be formed with those in agreement, and a Bank of Mexico credit will be obtained. . . ." Finally, since the peasants did not accept these reasons, the government representative told them that "the government will no longer undertake the cost of the job because the country is in debt. . . ."

For the Nuevo Nahuapa group, the consequences of this small effort to co-ordinate with the institutions have proved extremely negative. In view of the incredible request that has been made of them, they are willing to lose their 55,000 pesos already invested and do the job as they had planned in the beginning without asking for help from anyone.

In any case, the violation on the part of the SAHOP representatives of a simple agreement with the community has resulted in a waste of their resources. Nuevo Nahuapa, like so many other communities in the country, now has a job started that will never be finished; the peasants have lost 55,000 pesos; and the only water service they have is the one they created as their own project, using their own collective resources.

4.7. CONCLUSIONS

The dynamics of the creation of Nuevo Nahuapa are inseparable from the history of the peasant group that settles in the new village.

The capacity to develop a self-supported urbanization project and the creation of services is no more than an extension in another field of the self-generated development of the group in production and a continuation of a long struggle to guarantee the conditions for their existence and reproduction as peasants whose central theme has been the struggle for land.

The group has acted to overcome an initial situation characterized by semi-servile submission and a certain individualism generated by the lack of community traditions. They have had to join in solidarity to courageously face common obstacles and enemies: the exploitation by cattle landlords, then the hostility and aggressions of the Tomatlan caciques, and later, as well as during the entire process, the bias of the official institutions' representatives' favouritism of their enemies or, at best, their paternalism and inefficiency.

In this process the Nahuapa group generated not only the material resources but also the organizing force and necessary experience to successfully face the difficult job of building a new village practically without outside help and in the face of powerful interests.

If the urbanistic and service solutions implemented in Nuevo Nahuapa are efficient, it is not so much due to their technical virtues as to the driving principle: to rely on their own resources, to negotiate collectively for outside resources, and to look for solutions adequate for their resources and their needs. It is this methodology and not the urban model which they developed that can be generalized.

In this process, the participation of the institutions could have consolidated the achievements of the group and given them resources and technical elements which could not be generated by the group. However,

this would only have been possible if the official institution representatives had been able to understand the rationale of the group based on its own initiatives. Insofar as this did not occur, the representatives of the institutions became hostile to the group or at best tried to substitute their initiative with arbitrarily imposed "solutions." Thus the urbanistic virtues of Nuevo Nahuapa and the efficiency of their services have been achieved in spite of the representatives of the institutions and not thanks to them.

The participation of the MAYA group in this process has been based fundamentally on the identification of the researchers with the interests of the community group. This identification could not have been used in practice without the instrumental support resulting from the application of the research methodology and integration with the community herein described.

NOTES

1. Five hundred and forty animals from a (possibly underestimated) total of 14,335 heads, according to the 1970 census.
2. According to the census, 25,000 hilly hectares with natural grasses.
3. Ixtapa is a village in the municipality (today an ejido) near the Ameca River, which borders with Nayarit.
4. The 1970 census shows only 65 hectares of banana plantations in the municipality.
5. This area does not include the Cajon de Peña (Tomatlan) irrigation district.
6. Including Puerto Vallarta.
7. There are some indications that the union leaders respond to tourist interests in opposition to the Puerto Vallarta Fideicomiso (Trust), as will be seen further on.
8. *El Occidental* newspaper, 9 June 1975.
9. *Informática* No. 21 (2891), September 1977.
10. At the end of 1974 Antonio Pacheco (municipal president and Union Secretary General) was prevented from entering the municipal palace. However, Congress exonerated him of the charges against him and he took office.
11. *Excelsior* newspaper, 28 March 1975.
12. An anecdote told by one of the landlords is that when he arrived in the area by boat in 1963 his old administrator said he was happy that he had not died "without rendering accounts to the family," with whom he had been out of contact for the last 30 years.
13. From time to time the national press publishes accusations such as the following, which appeared in *El Dia* on 2 February 1975:
"Peasants from Barra de Navidad, Jalisco, claim that an American named James Edmund Day Elliot, general administrator of the Lomas de Chamela Company, is trying to take away from them 3,184 hectares, belonging to the ex-hacienda of Chamela which is now part of their ejido, to subdivide them into small property holdings."
14. This process could already be seen some years back. In 1974 the head of the SRA at that time, August Gomez Villanueva, recognized the existence of "private manipulations to take possession of the ejido lands in the region of Tomatlan, Jalisco" (*El Tiempo*

newspaper, Nayarit, 7 March 1974).

15. *El Dia* newspaper, 6 January 1974.
16. The agronomic and socio-economic problems that will be faced by this ejido after the relocation of their cultivation land within the irrigation district are analysed in section 3.6 of the previous chapter.
17. They were not granted the land they requested because it was within the Tomatlan Indian Community. This, however, was not an insurmountable obstacle, since the community lands will have to be relocated and compacted within the irrigation district.
18. Although slight, there was some resistance. Approximately one-third of the population does not want to leave the old place, and some are actively opposed. At present a few families remain in the old place, to look after their papaya and mango orchards. Some of the families have stayed here to be recognized eventually as commoners by the Tomatlan caciques.