

**SELF AND IDENTITY IN A
'COLONIA POPULAR' OF GUADALAJARA, MEXICO**

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To all my relations,
Para todas mis relaciones

ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses issues about the domain of identity in an urban **colonia popular** of Guadalajara, Mexico, with a particular focus on the Theology of Liberation evangelization proposed in its parishes. The thesis raises questions about the way in which self and identity can be anthropologically analyzed in such a context, and it discusses the relevance of this type of focus in the present scenario of urban Mexican anthropological investigation. Micro and macro structural approaches are brought together to analyze self and identity in the process of migration, in religious, medical, ritual and gender fields and to show how these fields are interconnected. Self and identity are analyzed as processes which arise in language and social interaction rather than as 'inner' essences or collective psychological traits. These processes, albeit complex, point to a common thread: an oscillation, pluralism and coexistence rather than a linear evolution between 'traditional' and 'new' elements. The definition and creation of these elements is contextualized in particular sets of power relations among family kin, and the creation of knowledge between clergy and laymen, and medical 'experts' and patients. These elements are also contextualized in representations of past and present experience in rural and urban places expressed through metaphors of space and time. From this analysis it emerges that self and identity embrace - to different degrees - issues of belonging, performative experience, connectedness, moral continuity and interdependence rather than autonomy, self-sufficiency and self-introspection.

Table of Contents

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	p.5
FOREWORD.....	p.7

INTRODUCTION

0.1. ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHICAL INSIGHTS ON THE SELF.....	p.10
0.2. SELF, PERSON AND INDIVIDUAL.....	p.14
0.3. SELF AND IDENTITY IN MEXICAN URBAN STUDIES.....	p.20
0.4. PROCESSES OF IDENTITY IN POLANCO.....	p.31

CHAPTER I: POLANCO A NEIGHBOURHOOD 'IN TRANSITION'

1.1. GUADALAJARA AN EXPANDING CITY.....	p.35
1.2. URBANISATION AND MIGRATION IN GUADALAJARA.....	p.40
1.3. THE COLONIA LOMAS DE POLANCO.....	p.44
1.3.1. THE SETTING.....	p.44
1.3.2. URBANISATION AND PROBLEMS OF LAND OWNERSHIP.....	p.47
1.3.2.1. THE MOVEMENT FOR THE 'LUCHA PARA EL ALCANTARILLADO': A GLORIOUS PAST.....	p.50
1.3.2.2. SOCIAL MOBILISATION IN THE 1990s: A MOMENT OF REASSESSMENT.....	p.54
1.3.3. SERVICES IN THE COLONIA.....	p.57
1.3.4. POPULATION CHANGES IN POLANCO.....	p.60
1.3.5. CENTRALISATION OF THE SUBURB.....	p.62
1.4. POLANCO IN THE NINETIES.....	p.65

CHAPTER II: CIUDAD, COLONIA, PUEBLO AND RANCHO

2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	p.67
2.2. MIGRATION AND BELONGING.....	p.69
2.2.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF BELONGING: HOUSE SPACE.....	p.71
2.2.2. NEIGHBOURHOOD SPACE IN THE EYES OF INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS.....	p.74
2.3. COMING TO THE CITY: AN EXPANSION OF KNOWLEDGE.....	p.80
2.4. 'SOY DE RANCHO'.....	p.87
2.5. 'SOY DE PUEBLO'.....	p.93
2.6. CONCLUSION.....	p.97

CHAPTER III: BETWEEN 'TRADITION' AND THE 'NEW': CHURCH RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES

3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	p.101
3.2. THE MEXICAN CHURCH: TRADITIONALISM, RADICALISM AND MODERNITY.....	p.102
3.2.1. THE MEXICAN CHURCH AND THE STATE.....	p.103
3.2.2. ORIENTATIONS WITHIN THE MEXICAN CHURCH.....	p.107
3.3. THE CHURCH IN POLANCO AND THE	

'QUESTION OF THE OTHER'.....	p.109
3.3.1. THE NEW CHURCH : THE EXPERIENCE OF THE 'COMUNIDADES'.....	p.112
3.3.1.1. CEBs AND JESUITS IN POLANCO.....	p.122
3.3.2. 'NEW' AND 'TRADITIONAL' PRIESTHOOD.....	p.129
3.3.2.1. CONVERGENCIES AND DIVERGENCIES IN 'NEW' AND 'TRADITIONAL' PRIESTHOOD.....	p.135
3.3.3. THE 'TRADITIONAL' CHURCH IN POLANCO...	p.139
3.3.3.1. EL MOVIMIENTO FAMILIAR CRISTIANO (MFC): SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES WITH THE CEBs.....	p.140
3.3.3.2. THE EXTREME 'TRADITIONALISM': THE ADORACION NOCTURNA.....	p.145
3.4. CONCLUSION.....	p.149

CHAPTER IV: HEALING/CURING PLURALISM: 'MEDICINA POPULAR' AND 'MEDICINA ALTERNATIVA'

4.1. INTRODUCTION.....	p.155
4.2. INSTITUTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CARES.....	p.157
4.3. THE EXPERIENCE OF 'MEDICINA POPULAR' IN POLANCO.....	p.161
4.3.1. 'MEDICINA POPULAR' AS 'MEDICINA ALTERNATIVA'.....	p.162
4.3.2. THE VIDASANA GROUP.....	p.165
4.3.3. 'MEDICINA POPULAR' AND THE SOCIAL NATURE OF ILLNESS.	p.169
4.3.4. HEALING AND SELF-WORTH.....	p.174
4.4. DISEASE AND INDIVIDUAL SIN.....	p.177
4.5. BETWEEN SCIENCE AND FAITH : ALLOPATHIC USE OF HOMOEOPATHY IN POLANCO.....	p.184
4.5.1. THE ALLOPATHIC USE OF HOMOEOPATHY.....	p.184
4.5.2. PATIENTS AND HOMOEOPATHIC CHOICE.....	p.189
4.6. CONCLUSION.....	p.193

CHAPTER V: RITUALS AND FIESTAS: BECOMING A 'MUJERCITA' AND RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

5.1. INTRODUCTION.....	p.199
5.2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIFTEENTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.....	p.201
5.3. THE CELEBRATION: A WEDDING WITHOUT HUSBAND.....	p.204
5.4. CEBs DISCOURSE: CHANGING FORM AND CONTENT OF TRADITIONAL RITUALS.....	p.210
5.5. BECOMING A 'MUJERCITA': THE TIME OF 'ILLUSION'.....	p.216
5.6. MASS AND THE FIESTA IN CONTEXT.....	p.224
5.6.1. CELEBRATING OR NOT CELEBRATING.....	p.224
5.6.2. MILENA, ANGELICA, SABRINA, JUANA AND ESTER.....	p.227
5.7. CONCLUSION.....	p.234

CHAPTER VI: GENDER IDENTITY AND FEMALE RESISTANCE

6.1. CONTROLLING THROUGH FEEDING AND SERVICE: COMPLIANCE AND RESISTANCE OF 'TRADITIONAL' WOMANHOOD.....	p.242
6.1.1. Miranda.....	p.244
6.1.2. Diana.....	p.250
6.2. ATTRIBUTES OF FEMALENESS: CHALLENGES TO 'MUJERES ABNEGADAS'.....	p.252
6.2.1. Blanca.....	p.254
6.2.2. Violeta.....	p.254
6.3. BE SUBMISSIVE BUT NOT 'DEJARSE'.....	p.257
6.4. 'NI SOLTERA, CASADA, VIUDA O DIVORCIADA': REACTIONS TO 'TRADITIONAL' WOMANHOOD.....	p.263
6.4.1. Antonia.....	p.263
6.4.2. RESISTANCE TO ABNEGATION: THE EXPERIENCE IN THE COMUNIDADES.....	p.265
6.4.2.1. Soledad.....	p.266
6.4.2.2. Carlota.....	p.269
6.5. MALE EXPERIENCE IN THE COMUNIDADES.....	p.271
6.5.1. Horacio.....	p.272
6.5.2. Mauricio.....	p.273
6.6. CONCLUSION.....	p.275

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS: 'AGARRANDO LA ONDA'

7.1. 'TRADITIONAL' AND 'NEW' FIELDS FOR IDENTITY.....	p.281
7.1.1. CONSCIOUSNESS AND NARRATIVE.....	p.285
7.1.2. RESPONSIBILITY AND FAILURE.....	p.286
7.1.3. COMPLEMENTARITIES OF MICRO AND MACRO ANALYSES.....	p.288
7.2. SELF IN PROCESS IN POLANCO.....	p.291
APPENDIX A.....	p.293
APPENDIX B.....	p.298
APPENDIX C.....	p.300
APPENDIX D.....	p.302
APPENDIX E.....	p.304
APPENDIX F.....	p.305
APPENDIX G.....	p.307

List of Maps

Appendix A:	
Maps of Guadalajara #1, #2.....	p.293
Map of Polanco # 1.....	p.294
Map of Polanco # 2.....	p.295

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been written on the basis of the data I gathered during eighteen months of fieldwork in Guadalajara between September 1990 and March 1992. My fieldwork was supported by a London University Scholarship grant. I actually lived in the community I studied from March 1991 to the end of my fieldwork. During my pre-fieldwork preparation, I spent a few months at the University of Wageningen, Department of non-Western sociology (supported by an Erasmus Scholarship), where Prof. Norman Long and his 'Mexicanist' group helped me to clarify my line of research.

The fieldwork was carried out mainly through participant observation in the community and in some of the villages of origin of the urban settlers. I used the parishes as a 'way in' into the life of the neighbourhood, so much of my material is gathered from that area of the community. I have also used in-depth interviews - a few repeated over time - with inhabitants and people working in the neighbourhood (e.g. homoeopaths), and maintained close relationships with a few families which I visited almost daily. I interviewed people outside the neighbourhood in other parishes, among the Jesuits, and in the 'complementary' medical professions. I used the archives of the Biblioteca Municipal de Guadalajara, the University of the ITESO, and the library of C.I.E.S.A.S. de Occidente to carry out newspaper and bibliographic research.

In the early stages of the research and through part of my fieldwork I received useful supervision from Dr. Mark Hobart. During my fieldwork I discussed my material and received useful commentaries from many, among them Dr. Guillermo de La Peña, Cristina Padilla Dieste and Patricia Fortuny Loret de Mola. To them my warmest thanks for their intellectual and human support. My process of writing has been patiently followed and stimulated by Dr. Richard Fardon and at a later stage also by Prof. Peter Worsley. I especially thank Dr. Fardon for his 'saturnian' presence which has helped me greatly to complete this work and learn more about the fine

edge between one's own work, one's self-esteem and self-identity.

I do not consider this thesis as a written work but as a whole life-experience. To those who have embarked on this boat with me, Socorro, Alfredo, Doña Mari, Don Roberto, Doña Cata and their families and to many others in Polanco, my deepest appreciations for their generosity, support and wisdom. With them my family, Mara, Picchio, Leli, Barry and Sarah, and nonno Bernardo who have equipped me with spiritual, psychological and material sails to go through difficult weather. And finally to the community of the Teopantli Kalpulli which has been a constant source of great inspiration and human support, and to my companion Ajay Sehgal, whom I appreciate for his endless comments, silent support and for having sailed through the transformative challenge of this thesis beside me.

Note to the reader

To help the flow of the reading I have placed the English translations of the quotes in the main text, and put the Spanish original versions in the endnotes, which are at the end of each chapter. Translations which are kept in the main text are between round brackets, while my suggestions in the translations are kept between squared brackets. The transcriptions in the thesis are from taped conversations; they are, therefore, samples of spoken, Mexican Spanish rather than 'grammatically correct' written Spanish. Case histories in chapters V and VI are written in a different font. Throughout the text I have used a small case 'c' for the word 'church' to refer to the physical building and large case 'C' otherwise. Appendix F is a list of the main actors who appear throughout the thesis; appendix G is a list of the abbreviations. Lastly people's names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

FOREWORD

I was originally brought to Polanco by an anthropologist friend who did research with the Jehovah Witnesses there. We went directly to the church of the Santa Magdalena and the first person to whom I spoke was Doña Angelina - an unmarried middle-aged woman who had cleaned the church for many years. With her mother, she had left a **rancho** south of Jalisco in the early 1960s and she had returned there only once since; her dream was to be able to travel more independently: but she could not take buses or coaches on her own because she was unable to read the destination in the front. In the following months I lost touch with her.

The afternoon I left Polanco, at the end of March 1992, I was in the park in front of the parish to take some last photos with Alfredo - to whom I am in debt for a good part of my understanding about people in Polanco. Before entering the car to leave for good, I chanced upon Angelina who I had not seen for many months. She expressed surprise to see me still around, and she greeted me kindly. After she left I remembered our first encounter and thrilled to the perfection of life...a cycle had closed.

INTRODUCTION

This introduction delineates an area of investigation - self and identity in a *mestizo* population - which has been underexplored by Mexican anthropologists writing on urban Mexico. The introduction is in four sections. The first two are general discussions of notions of self, person and individual employed in anthropology. This examination of previous usages forms the background to the approach used in my own analysis. By using certain words, talking about themselves and one another in terms of their belonging, and about religious and medical beliefs and gender relations, people categorize themselves among others in multiple ways. Self, other and collectivity are mutually constitutive terms which must be studied in their interaction. These terms can be inferred from everyday conversation but, in doing that, the anthropologist should look closely at their local, social construction. Failure to do so can lead us to uncritically assume Western, modern assumptions as 'universal' postulates about the nature of the self and collective identity. In the local Mexican context presuppositions about self and collective identity both overlap with and differ from their general Western counterparts. So Western assumptions are spelled out as introductory lines for research rather than as the bases for comparative analysis.

The first section notes the nexus between the everyday presuppositions of Western society and the analytical presuppositions of anthropological theory. The second section dwells upon my own treatment and narrative of the self as a process embedded in contested ideas of tradition and modernity/novelty as these concern religious, medical and gender behaviour and the symbolic value accorded to particular places - all of which are interrelated. I show how Western presuppositions cannot be taken as universal, but rather their appropriateness varies in kind and/or degree. The third and fourth sections of this introduction locate these general concerns: firstly within the context of anthropological studies

of urban Mexico, and then with specific reference to Polanco, in Guadalajara, where I carried out my research. A brief outline of the contents of the thesis is supplied. The different perspectives used in this study reveal the complexity and the potentially open-ended constitution of the urban self.

However, my study has been practically delimited by the theoretical form of my research and has at no point aimed to be 'comprehensive'. My material has been gathered, predominantly, from women rather than men, and, thanks to the circumstances of my residence in Polanco, from women involved in the Theology of Liberation movement. These biases, however, make the study relevant for the documentation of experiences of urban women elsewhere in Mexico and of the critical role of Liberation Theology in shaping these experiences. To have adopted other approaches in this thesis - for instance taking families with shared business interests, or coming from the same village - would have emphasized different, though equally valid factors in the processes of self and identity. All ethnographic accounts are, in some respects, 'prisoners' - though for this very same reason creative outcomes - of the participatory experience they report.

0.1. ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSIGHTS INTO THE QUESTION OF THE SELF

This section - discussing some of the assumptions which characterize the self in 'Western' thought, and therefore much of anthropological enquiry - is designed to draw attention to different aspects of the processes of self and identity. Such processes establish 'inner' and 'outer' spaces, notions of autonomy based on will and freedom, 'inwardness', morality, individuation and reflexivity.

Following Charles Taylor, the 'Western', modern notion of the self¹ pivots around the importance of 'ordinary life',

¹ I am aware of the danger of essentialising these notions as an expression of 'the' Western. At no point in this thesis do I claim to be comparing dominant, philosophical characteristics of 'the western' self with the everyday life-practice of a 'Mexican self'. Those notions are given - as I pointed out above - simply as reference points/areas for

autonomy and dignity. Identity is constituted in a moral space and the self is shaped through temporal and spatial metaphors (Taylor 1989:28; Hallowell 1955:93). What gives continuity to the self is its narrative, and puzzles of identity relate to the possibility of alienating or transferring the memory which constitutes such a narrative (Rorty 1976:314)². Life, therefore is a quest for orientation in a moral space. The source of morality, together with evaluations³ and a notion of inwardness, are central to the 'quest' of life. Inwardness arises from a presupposition that man does not 'naturally' know himself, but needs to investigate himself through introspection.

Introspection is guided by the assumption of the rightness of this inner nature which is accessible through feelings and impulses. Inner states are the source of rightness and morality; morality, once associated with the outcomes of actions, is conceived, in modern language, to be centred in human motivations. But what transforms the knowing subject into a human agent is the capacity of transforming his own will into actions. By virtue of the 'Expressivist turn', - at the time of Romanticism's emergence - access to the moral world meant there was a need to have access to one's inner self and inner depths (Taylor 1989: 374, 390). The inner self came to be thought of as a 'true' natural self because the parameters of truth are relative to humans. Notions of the individuation and integration of the self arose during this Romantic period. Individuation relates to the originality and

investigation, not as terms for comparison/ polarisation. Polarisation prevents the discovery of parallelism that may exist between metaphors of native's life-organisation and anthropologists' theories of knowledge (Gudeman & Rivera 1990).

² 'In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going' (Taylor 1989:47).

³ Evaluations are the basis of our sense of worth and imply responsibility. They are constitutive of self-identity because they are intimately connected to how we experience reality and to the process of self-interpretation (Taylor 1985).

creative transformation which is at the base of subjectivity; integration refers to the unification of aesthetic with ethical, sensory and rational experiences. For the Romantics, people have to experience the world in order to understand it. With post-romanticism the human being, through the power of interpretation, can transfigure the world (Taylor 1989:456).

This notion of the integration and essential unity of the self has been challenged by postmodernists (Kellner 1992:143). Belief in a unitary narrative of the self has now given way to emphasis on the fragmentation of spatial memory. This is because the self is constituted through exchange in language, and language has lost its unitary meaning⁴. Language is central to the constitution of identity. It is not only descriptive but also constitutive of our experiences. Language creates the 'public space' where emotions and evaluations are shaped - these being fundamental to the process of self-interpretation which constitutes the self (Taylor 1985:270). Psychological experiences, therefore, are shaped by moral evaluations formulated in language. In this thesis, then, I consider the self as a process rather than a state, or as a sum of different states - a process which takes place, in great part, in language.

My original interest in the study of self and identity in Polanco grew out of my concern with the issue of consciousness. By consciousness I mean the relation between experiences of reality and their interpretation, which implies moral and ethical beliefs. I expected to encounter practices of self-reflection, self-knowledge and certain degrees of introspection

⁴ Postmodernist thought has been accused of nihilism, because it has explored only one side of Nietzschean thought. This hinges upon the definition of the self through the exercise of power and discipline; for instance, through the assumption/imposition of a metaphysical truth of language which conceals the 'real', continuous differing and deferring of language itself (as in the interpretations of Derrida and Foucault). But these interpretations tend to overlook Nietzsche's notion of the human will to self-superelevation which, rejecting the idea of a constant human essence, shows that there is an intrinsically positive potential in humans (Taylor 1989: 488,489).

in Polanco. Some of my expectations were disappointed. The people I lived with were not really inclined to talk about introspection or about themselves as self-reflective 'subjects'. Abandoning this as a theoretical starting-point for enquiry, I stopped asking questions about people's perception of themselves, because the idea of oneself as a separate subject was not a prominent meaningful dimension in terms of which people talked about their experiences of life. Instead I simply participated in activities in the neighbourhood, collecting life-histories and interviews which might give insights into the different components involved in the process of the formation of self-identity, rather than looking for direct expressions of self-reflection.

Another initial difficulty in this study was that I was confused about *levels of knowledge*. I thought that anthropological language and investigation would allow me to look into the knowledge of the body and of the spirit as it does for the knowledge of the mind. But if we assume that knowledge of the mind 'is' the knowledge of the spirit, then all knowledge is reduced to cognitive knowledge (conflating sensory and contemplative with cognitive experience) (Wilber 1983:36). In doing so we mistake theorisation about knowledge for experience of knowledge. This thesis tackles some issues of the self and collective identity which are related to knowledge of the mind, and speculates about these other levels which also constitute dimensions of identity. It is important to stress, however, that sensory and spiritual experiences are equally important in these processes.

0.2. SELF, PERSON AND INDIVIDUAL

To understand the process by which the self is constituted, it is necessary to examine the relation between social actions and their representations by natives and by anthropologists⁵. Some aspects of religious, medical and ritual practices in Polanco show tensions between social and individual domains in these relations. The argument of this thesis is that in Polanco, the 'essentialisation' of these domains reveals particular power relations between lay and clerical people, between 'experts'/leaders/ homoeopaths on the one hand, and 'non experts'/followers/patients on the other. While it is relevant to discuss the semantics of terms such as self, person and individual, divisions between self, person and individual in social interaction should not be treated as categories which constitute fixed boundaries, either for the natives or for the anthropologist. To do so risks reifying culturally particular separations between psychological and social domains: presuppositions about the private and the public, about code and substance and inner and outer experiences (Rosaldo 1984: 146)⁶. An assumption of universal, fixed boundaries would predispose us to ignore the tensions and semantic slippages which reveal the plurality of native interpretative processes.

In anthropology Mauss is usually treated as the point of departure for enquiries about the self, person and individual. His work uncovered the self as the subject of social history, and highlighted changes in the moral and legal fields that have shaped the history of the person. Readings of Mauss have

⁵ Reflexivity in anthropological analyses and issues of ethnographic authority have rightly raised questions about the imposition of anthropologists' assumptions in ethnographic descriptions (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Clifford 1983).

⁶ This is the case of studies such as Kakar (1978, 1979) about the 'Indian self'. Kakar, through the study of literary texts, locates the self at the critical boundary between an 'inner' (intuitive, boundless, mythological, nurturing) and an 'outer' (objective, post-nurturing) world, but makes no reference to the construction of the self in specific social interactions.

distinguished the person - as a 'member of a significant and ordered collective' (Carrithers 1985:235) associated it with social and secular domains - and the self as a spiritual and moral agency⁷. The self can also be studied as a process of growth in social interaction⁸, the experiences of which, in terms of feeling and thoughts, are influenced by socially organized modes of actions. In fact anthropological approaches to the study of the self and person have often centred on the study of life-cycles (e.g. Moore 1973, Keifer 1974, Rosaldo 1980). Notions of life-cycle are related to ideas of sameness and continuity, self-perception and recognition by others (Erikson 1959: 222-247). Rosaldo, for instance, infers that the experience of the self in Ilingot society is the 'understanding' and 'feeling' of 'social aptitudes, linguistic competence, and technical skills'(Rosaldo 1980:94) which then 'provide the idioms that order and connect'(Rosaldo 1984:29). These experiences belong especially to two male life-stages marked by head-hunting: a passage from 'anger' to 'passion', and from bachelorhood into the condition of 'knowledge' of married man.

Other anthropological distinctions between person, self and individual have discussed the person in terms of will, responsibility, legal and moral agency; the self as a locus of possession of rights and power; and the individual as the integrative being which becomes differentiated in social action (Rorty 1976). In this view, the self is related to the economic and the political spheres, and is 'possessor' of properties which can be alienated, while the rights of the individual are inalienable (Rorty 1976: 302). This is the position of transactional analyses of the self, which argue that transactions of symmetric and asymmetric characteristics

⁷ Carrithers defines the self as 'the psychical and mental individuality of human beings within a natural and spiritual cosmos, and interacting with each other as moral agents' (Carrithers 1985:236).

⁸ See Gredys Harris (1989) for a discussion of the self as locus of experiences like birth, growing up, ageing and dying.

(e.g of gender, economic interests and psychological types) between actors transform the 'nature' of the actors themselves (Mariott 1976). This interchangeability between nature and substance, and notions of a 'dividual' self challenge dominant Western notions of the unity and 'indivisibility' of the self⁹. However, dominant notions are always the product of particular, changing socio-historical conditions and they should always be analyzed together with 'deviant' notions of the self.

An analysis of the self as a process of conscious moral agency and transference of rights calls for analyses that look at the negotiation of power between people. It is for this reason that anthropological studies of self and person have developed a focus on agency. Agency refers to the possibility and power of doing that actors have in doing things and being recognized by others so doing (Giddens 1991: 56). Agency is not only a characteristics of humans, but also of groups and divine entities¹⁰. For instance, the city of Guadalajara or Polanco itself can become agencies once they acquire power over people's lives (chapter II).

A stress on the agent's power 'of doing' also contains notions of complementarity and solidarity. Power has to be thought of as a capacity to influence other people's behaviour, as well as a form of 'give and take' - power is constrictive as well as generative (Droogers 1990). The case of female power is a good example for women^{wh} often have only limited

⁹ 'It appears that persons are generally thought by South Asians to be 'dividual' or divisible. To exist, dividual persons absorb heterogeneous material influences. They must also give out from themselves particles of their own coded substances -essences, residues, or other active influences- that may reproduce in others something of the nature of the person in whom they have originated...Dividual persons, who must exchange in such ways, are therefore always composites of substance-code that they take in' (Marriott 1976:111).

¹⁰ Early studies in the anthropology of religion drew attention to the interrelation between human and non-human agencies, rejecting the division between the natural, the material and (transcendental) supernatural, seeing this relationship as constitutive of the self in a 'culturally constituted behavioural environment' (Hallowell 1955:87).

access to social resources, yet their influence on other people's behaviour is significant. In Polanco 'traditional' women tend to gain power by - what I have called - 'giving themselves away' through unconditional service and love: being 'powerless' makes them powerful (chapter VI).

Moreover, the stress on individual intentionality cannot always explain events which are the outcome of unintended consequences of agents' actions (Ortner 1984: 157). This is the case for the Jesuits and the actions of the **Comunidades de Base** inspired by Liberation Theology (chapter III). People's comments on the effects of their work in Polanco shows that their action did not always have the effects they intended, because of many factors, such as the clergy holding different root-metaphors about life than the local people and maintaining, in the end, a 'traditional' clerical relationship of power and knowledge vis-à-vis laymen.

These interconnections between agent, power, context and morality challenge the approaches to the process of the self and identity of both symbolic interactionist (Goffman 1959; 1968)¹¹ and culture and personality theories (Shweder and Bourne 1982, Hsu 1985) - two approaches which have been used as theoretical framework for a number of Mexican urban anthropological studies of identity (see below). Performative aspects - stressed in symbolic anthropology - which circumscribe ideas of styles, manners, and bodily communication, are processes through which knowledge is constituted, but these processes do not exist in a vacuum they are intimately connected with the motivation of agents in social action and with the power relations implied in such dynamics. Moreover, 'psychological' notions such as shame, guilt and human goodness should not be seen apart from

¹¹ One of the main criticisms of a symbolic interactionism's view of the self is that the 'I' is treated as the sum of different 'me's' (what other people say, think, communicate about the person). This assumes that self-knowledge is equal to knowledge about the self, but the two differ because self-knowledge cannot be seen apart from the agent's commitment to the process of knowing (Hamlyn 1977: 191).

standards of failure, notions of responsibility and worthiness respectively. In other words psychological traits should not be allowed to become an essentialisation of culture¹².

In my view, the self should not be studied as a category but as a process of consciousness - expressed through narrative - which pivots around awareness, responsibility and intentionality in social interaction. Narrative is central to the way in which the construction of identity in Polanco is discussed in this thesis. A few key aspects are central to this narrative of the self and of group identities: the condition of 'in-betweenness' of the neighbourhood (chapter I); the metaphors of urban and rural space and time, which people use (chapter II); the plurality of definitions of what is 'traditional' or 'new' for different people and groups involved in the life of the church (chapter III); and alternative-to-allopathic medical practices (chapter IV). The process of the self is explored as what gives 'continuity' to different ways of interacting and being in social practice, and the material of the thesis is but one way to explore that: through a narrative of specific *representations* of social interaction in the eyes of the anthropologist.

Narrative is also an element which gives continuity to life-cycles. Aspects of female life-spans and life-cycle rituals (i.e. the girls' fifteenth birthday celebration) highlight different responsibilities, expectations and visions of the world involving oneself and others. The fifteenth birthday celebration, for instance, initiates a time of

¹² Problems related to essentialisation of culture are also encountered in hermeneutic interpretative approaches. To assume the existence of an 'essence' of culture, shaped into a concept of the person (e.g. Geertz 1973) is misleading because it assumes the existence of a 'knowing subject' and of a system of knowledge which is 'in isolation from its semantic context and the situation of its use' (Hobart 1984: 143). Moreover this assumption overlooks the relation between possible coexisting systems of interpretation, and the relationships of power and domination on which these interpretations are based (Gledhill 1994: 68). For a discussion of the relevance of some of these issues in the urban anthropological debate see Rollwagen (1986).

'illusion' which ends with marriage - the beginning of the time of 'reality' (chapter V). Growing is a biological process, but the semantic fields implied by notions of what it is to be a human, a child, a *mujercita* or a *señora* - a female adolescent or adult - are rooted in social interaction. Chapters V and VI investigate Catholic notions of human growth with particular reference to female adolescence and adulthood.

Concepts of Christian adulthood do not imply a monolithic concept of human development. At the base of Christian 'models' of human being are two, partly opposed, notions (Bouwsama 1979). On the one hand, adulthood (from *adolescere*: to grow up) defines a process, rather than the possession of a particular kind of state. It establishes a continuity between child and adult. Hence the past is not 'left' behind but reshaped in the present. On the other hand, manhood¹³ stresses the rational faculty of humans. It rests more on a dualism between form and substance (body and soul, reason and passion) and therefore regards the spontaneity of childhood as a form of uncontrolled passion. The present is 'moving away' from the past through self-denial and self-discipline, the idea of salvation being central. In both interpretations common human nature and individual growth are achieved through bonds of love and service to others - and therefore in social relations.

Both interpretations are present in the case of Polanco. Notions of moving away or integrating the past in the present (chapter II), and of men's 'childishness' in gender relations (chapter VI) are strong in everyday life, and notions of denial of the body and sacrifice (chapters III, IV and VII), as a means of redemption both of one's own life and of collective and social sin, are also present.

¹³ The Anglo-Saxon word man derives from the Sanskrit root 'man' (Monier-Williams Sanskrit/English dictionary) which translates as thinking.

0.3 SELF AND IDENTITY IN MEXICAN URBAN STUDIES

This section discusses ways in which the topics of self and identity have been developed in major anthropological analyses of urban Mexico - with particular reference to the *mestizo* population. The *mestizo* population is understudied in comparison to the indigenous population (Arizpe 1989). Mexican urban ethnography has been influenced by both an 'interactionist' approach - based on an idea of maximizing man - and by historical structuralism which, often embracing Marxist reductionism, has wiped away multi-dimensional aspects of the self by confining them to labour in productive and consumptive spheres.

One of the principle aims of this thesis is to make a small contribution to urban Mexican ethnography. It starts, and then develops from, two major trends which have influenced much of the literature on the subject: on the one hand, the position of those influenced by Culture and Personality Theory, in which the process of urbanisation was a 'way of living' and a form of psycho-sociological adaptation; on the other, those influenced by historical materialism (via Castells 1976¹⁴) who initially tended to analyze social interaction in terms of production and consumption, and later focused on urban movements demanding the installation of structural services as the expression of the contradictions of structural formations.

Mahar (1992) rightly observes that both the 'interactionist' and 'system theory' approaches hinge on a universal notion of human adaptation¹⁵. Mahar, instead, uses Bourdieu's notions of fields and habitus to look at a popular neighbourhood of Oaxaca, which she then studies as a social

¹⁴ In Castell's early historical materialist writings the self loses its power of subjectivity and becomes a spatial metaphor: a 'place', a position defined by the structural elements of society and their interrelation, this losing its interpretative and creative qualities.

¹⁵ This universal notion of human adaptation 'views modernisation and urbanisation as processes which follow a broadly similar pattern, in spite of regional variations which may be found in specific times and places' (Mahar 1992: 276).

space created by different life-styles through negotiation of material and symbolic power in everyday life. Her approach has concerns similar to mine about some of the limitations of existing urban anthropological analysis in Mexico.

Nevertheless, even if I agree with her focus on the conditions and styles of the actions which produce prestige and status, I am cautious about her claim that internalisation of 'objective' practice occurs at a 'subjective' level which, she claims, is below 'verbal expression' (Mahar 1992:281). This appears to me to associate the boundary of the subject/self uncritically with a Western division/hierarchy between the conscious and the unconscious¹⁶.

'Culture and personality' theory has been out of anthropological fashion for some time, but has influenced many North American ethnographic accounts of Mexico (Diaz 1966, Kearney 1972, Díaz-Guerrero 1975, Romanucci-Ross 1973, Fromm & Macobby 1970, Foster 1979, Kemper 1977)¹⁷. The studies of Foster (1979) and Kemper (1977), for instance, focus on the transformation of Tzinztuntzan village and its migrants to Mexico City. They both describe migration - treating identity in a functionalist way - as a process of modernisation which involves changing attitudes and life-styles. Moreover, they associate 'traditional' with 'backward' and use a concept of maximizing man as the criterion to judge the 'forwardness' and the 'backwardness' of the community of Tzinztuntzenos. Foster uses a model of 'limited good'¹⁸ to describe changes in

¹⁶ 'The knowledge and the perception through which the Colonos lived their lives can be viewed as a product of their internalisation and incorporation of objective structures and of the power relations which were reproduced here' (Mahar 1992: 282).

¹⁷ For a summary and critique of Mexican literature on psychosocial aspects of the 'ser mexicano' (being mexican) stereotype, see Navarro (1979:33-102).

¹⁸ The 'limited good' model is the description of human behaviours in a zero sum game in which advantage is always gained at someone else's expenses: 'By *Image of Limited Good* I mean that behaviour in these and other broad areas is patterned in such fashion as to suggest that Tzinztuntzeños see their

attitudes, morals and religious beliefs. Considerable secularisation and economic differentiation took place during the two decades in which Foster analyzed the community. Nonetheless, he argues that villagers held on to patterns of prestige and behaviour which were detrimental to their economic improvement. Psychological factors, such as the fear of other villagers' envy, are portrayed as causes of the slow rate of life-style improvement in the village - leading to a maintenance of the status quo (Foster 1979:164). Absence of this envy is considered to have been one of the causes of the economic success of migrants to Mexico City (Kemper 1977).

The problem with these types of analyses (see also Díaz 1966:76-93, Kearney 1972) is the assumption of universal psychological characteristics. Presuppositions about universal inner states - as discussed above - are misleading because of their psychological ethnocentrism (Needham 1981). This is one of the major criticisms made by the ethnopsychologists, who have pointed out the need to study the construction of personhood through folk theories of knowledge, especially in relation to ways of talking about the body, illness, deviancy, feelings such as love, sadness, compassion, notions of life-cycle changes and human development (e.g. Kirkpatrick and White 1985).

In any survey of urban Mexican studies particular mention has to be made of the work of Lewis (1959, 1961). Heavily criticized for creating a portrayal of a marginal 'culture of poverty', and for the lack of anthropological reflexivity, his work is, however, a lively account focusing on the daily practices of different families in a low-income neighbourhood

social, economic, and natural universes - their total environment - as one in which almost all desired things in life such as land, other forms of wealth, health, friendship, love, manliness, honour, respect, power, influence, security, and safety *exist in absolute quantities insufficient to fill even minimal needs of villagers*' (Foster 1979: 123). So life is described by Foster as a perpetual struggle for 'equilibrium' in social interaction, which prevents social differentiation between members of the community but at the same time precludes 'modernisation'.

of Mexico City. His work, which was a reaction to the Redfield model of urbanisation/atomization, has been much criticized, but the 'genre' of narrative, he uses, to describe everyday social interaction has its virtue¹⁹.

Other accounts of urban Mexico have emphasized structures of production and reproduction - analysing the 'life of the poor' in its diversified forms of strategic adaptation to economic shortages and the effects of the oil crisis since the early 1980s (e.g. Lomnitz 1977, Arizpe 1978, Hirabayashi 1983, Higgins 1983, Gonzales de La Rocha 1986, Roberts 1986, Selby (et al.) 1987, 1990). Yet other studies have explored specific socio-political resistances to incorporation into the national system (Velez-Ibañez 1983, Logan 1984) or have used a historical structural analysis to comprehend migration and the process of identity - pointing out, though, the limitations of this approach in the understanding of micro levels (Arizpe 1978: 50). Lately, attention has been concentrated on the diversified strategies employed by actors and grass root movements in dealing with the economic crisis (Escobar & De la Peña 1990) and with the differentiation of gendered power relations as expressions of a 'collective rationality' - rather than individual interests - in household relations and domestic cycles (Gonzales de la Rocha et al. 1990: 354).

Some of these studies have been concerned to 'discover laws' of social interaction, that is to uncover general recurrent patterns of socio-economic adaptation. This thesis, by contrast, does not seek to demonstrate any 'natural laws' of social systems²⁰. The aspects of life in Polanco, which I describe, are one of many possible narratives which could have

¹⁹ It is well known that Lewis gathered the main part of his material through personal interviews he carried out at home. The fictitious condition in which the material was gathered cast doubts upon the 'realism' of the account, but not upon the strength of the ethnographic narrative.

²⁰ Lomnitz writes about networks of reciprocity in Cerrada del Condor as 'a universal human predicament of survival' (1977:213), but this definition probably corresponds more closely to the anthropologist's idea of a Rousseauesque naturally good man, than to any universal urban 'reality'.

been written and they are directly linked to both the specificity of the social space and the anthropologist's representation.

Lomnitz (1977), in her account of an urban squatter settlement - 'Cerrada del Condor' - in Mexico City, infers that multiple forms of reciprocity and social solidarity are at the base of social interaction and that marginality is functional to the capitalist stratification of society. She argues that the intensity of reciprocal exchange relates to kinship (e.g. family/ godparenthood), economic value in terms of equality of wants, and a psychosocial link (i.e. *confianza*, the mutual trust which is a vital component of social interaction). Her focus is upon network analysis within an historical structuralist framework. She describes migration from a rural to an urban environment as a threefold process: first a stage of the 'saturation' of the 'ecological niche' (the original place), then a 'transfer' (which includes all the factors related to migration), then 'stabilisation' (a recovered equilibrium in a new 'niche'). It is evident that this 'ecological model' is reductive in some respects because, for instance, it uses a single notion of neutral and linear time to describe a social interaction which actually involves other aspects of time. The process of migration in Polanco involves a more varied notion of time than the linear or 'historical' time implied in theories of, say, class struggle. Time can become specialized (e.g. the past is 'my village'), so that changes in perceptions of space as a result of the urban experience affect experience and representations of time. Space is referred to in terms of unity and fragmentation, and time-space can become both the re-enactment of the past in the present and the reinterpretation of the past through the experience of the present (chapter II).

Some historical structuralist studies of urban communities aim at finding out the 'scientificity' of urban

formation through an objectification of space²¹. Higgins (1983) is probably an extreme example of this trend. He argues that the case of the Colonia Linda Vista, in Oaxaca, shows that social solidarity decreases both with socio-economic consolidation (i.e. the installation of basic services) and with the influence of national capitalist ideology. This ideology, which stresses a fictitious social equality, impinges upon people through the media. Higgins interprets the life of the Colonos of Linda Vista through a hierarchical tension between collectivism and individualism, and discusses identity in terms of the production and consumption of use-value:

the material condition of relation of production
and of balance between use value produced and power
of consumption influences the nature of human roles
in family interaction (Higgins 1983:73).

Economic relations influence household relationships, and individual maintenance of material self-worth determines religious practice (Higgins 1983:82). Self-identity is thus reduced to the process of creating use-value and handling exchange-values.

This extreme example of reductionism reflects the problems of 'vulgar Marxism', which does not take into account human motivation or reduces human motivation and intentionality to economic striving. Human consciousness, in Marxist terms, is a consciousness of a life-process, in a social-historical context, and is based on human intentionality (Markus 1979:26). Its stress on people as agents of production and reproduction (Gonzales De La Rocha 1986, Escobar 1986), leads to a focus on the 'scientificity' of social interaction rather than on subjective and interpretative aspects of such interaction. But the dismissal of interpretative aspects in this kind of

²¹ I refer to the influence of the early writing by Castells (1976, 1977). I do not challenge the validity of such a complex analysis but I point out the need to go beyond the view of urbanism as a cluster of modes of production and consumption. Nonetheless, it has to be acknowledged that historical structuralism, and Marxist analysis in general, has drawn attention to the interconnection between macro and micro levels.

Marxism, leaves the general humanistic aspect of marxism²² - the idea that man produces, influences and transforms his thoughts and feelings through labour - under-explored²³.

However, there are examples of ethnographic accounts which try to go beyond structural interpretations of class struggle (Velez-Ibañez 1983). Velez-Ibañez describes, in very interesting terms, the interaction between a neighbourhood organisation and the Mexican political system, focusing on actors' lives, and delineating the political process in term of spatial metaphors. He gives an account of the life of Arturo, the head of the 'Congreso Restaurador De Colonos' in a poor neighbourhood of Mexico City, and how he lost his political base. This process shows how populism operates through the integration of a few leaders into the political system at the expense of the unchanged socio-economic conditions of their supporters.

For Arturo the notion of the self takes form in two 'localities'. One is the network defined by his wife, kin and fictive female kin (*comadres*). These constitute a network - a field of primary self-identity - which permits the establishment and maintenance of a second-order locality: networks of support with male mates, and *compa drazgo*, which becomes vital for Arturo's sense of 'public', social identity (Velez-Ibañez 1983:155). In this sense 'private' and 'public' merge, and these women are, for Arturo, the source of his sense of past and present, as well as his sense of continuity. This type of analysis combines macro with micro levels (e.g. life-histories with political patronage at national levels) and shows how power is grounded in everyday life.

Logan (1984), on the other hand, analyses the impact of an urban movement - part of an urban development project - on

²² For a discussion of Marxist analyses in urban anthropological studies which have understated humans as subjects of production of meanings see Lynch (1979).

²³ 'Work, however, changes not only the object at which it is directed, but also the labouring subject itself: it transforms not only the external nature, but the human nature as well' (Markus 1978: 8).

the formation and establishment of a poor neighbourhood. Logan's analysis looks at the formation and consolidation of the neighbourhood of Santa Cecilia in the north-east of Guadalajara. There are interesting parallels between Polanco and Santa Cecilia, both being *fraccionamientos* created more or less in the same period (see chapter I). Both are economically heterogeneous and have been areas of important Jesuit activity.

Logan's title 'Haciendo Pueblo' ('making the people/village')²⁴ suggests that the community is a physical and social entity but also a 'cognitive framework'. She argues against the assumption of a 'culture of poverty', that disintegration of cultural identity occurs in the city, and describes instead how people are active actors in the processes of adaptation and transformation of the urban environment²⁵. Logan's description reveals conflicts of interest when she points out the failure of a university student-based movement which had aimed to 'help' women raise their consciousness so that they could act upon their life-situation. Its failure hinged upon assumptions about 'consciousness raising' and 'self-fulfilment', both of which Logan reveals to be alien to women in Santa Cecilia. These remarks hint at the 'clash' of different notions of the self. Logan could have explored this clash further, going beyond explanation based on polarity between individual and community identity and personal interests in social interaction (Logan 1984: 121) (see chapter VI).

More recent urban studies have explored the relation between national, local and familial levels and their bearing

²⁴ I discuss some aspects of the semantic/interpretation of the word *pueblo* in chapters II and III.

²⁵ See also Butterworth (1981) for the view - opposed to Redfield's approach that adaptation to urban life is a 'linear' process, which implies a loss of rural traditions - that a central role is played by the 'ruralisation' of urban space and life.

upon social inequality (Murphy and Stepick: 1991)²⁶. Describing four families from different social classes, Murphy and Stepick argue that household reciprocity is crucial in the adaptation to socioeconomic changes at the different levels of city, region and state. Children are supported through their education in the hope that they will repay this support to their parents during their old age, and that they will carve out a better life for themselves. But the fulfilment of that hope depends on the socioeconomic conditions of the household, on luck (Murphy 1991: 169) and on a pattern of reciprocity that can easily be upset by a general deterioration in material, living conditions caused by the inequality of relations between Oaxaca and the national and international economies, and by inequalities between different classes in Oaxaca. Even if Murphy and Stepick's reading is still influenced by an interactionist understanding of the maximising individual, they argue that it is the household and the family, not the individual, which form the cornerstone of Oaxacan social life (Murphy and Stepick 1991: 138).

The case of Polanco supports their view that ideas of the autonomous individual are not helpful in understanding gendered identity. Rather than assuming notions of autonomy, this thesis focuses on the importance that connectedness has for people's (especially women's) self-identity (chapter VI). Not only family relations but aspects of 'belonging' show, again that ideas of the autonomous, self-sufficient and maximising individual are inadequate for the analysis of self and identity in Polanco. Other urban analyses have also pointed out the lack of self-sufficiency in lovers relationships, because 'it is not a woman or a man who is loved, but a person integrated within a family system' [my translation] (Arizpe 1989:107).

²⁶ Their long-term study of adaptation to socio-economic changes in the town of Oaxaca is based on an historical analysis (from pre-colonial times to the present day) of the interaction between different social classes in cyclical integration, as well as isolation from the national Mexican system.

Arizpe (1989) gives one of the most articulated accounts of the *practice of talking* about changes in different spheres of life (local culture, religion, politics, sexuality and philosophy of life) among a varied population sample in the city of Zamora (Michoacán). Her analysis interestingly describes which parts of the population - the upper or middle bourgeoisie, the poor or the indian population - tend to challenge or to hold on to specific traditional values. She argues that capitalist development in Zamora has not generated any cultural response to counterbalance new forms of social, political and sexual inequality (Arizpe 1989: 237), and that technological modernisation in Zamora has not been met by modernity - in terms of progressive and rational values (Arizpe:240). Arizpe's study aims to bridge the gap between action and interpretation of action through the study of the act of interpretation as practice. However, because the research was done through questionnaires, and there are no in-depth case-studies, her analysis does not develop issues of agency and power relations between interpretants. Moreover, she does not explore how notions of 'traditional' and 'modern' values are defined in a particular context, but tends to assume them, uncritically, prior to analysis.

This thesis carries forwards and partially challenges elements of the analyses which I have described. My theoretical interest - as I expressed above - concerns the process of constructing identity and the ways in which people represent and interpret everyday life. The first part of the thesis outlines the articulation between the neighbourhood of Polanco and wider urban and national lay and religious institutions. For methodological reasons, in some parts of this thesis, Polanco is discussed as if it was a self-contained unit of analysis²⁷. Indeed there are instances when people do

²⁷ This is the case with the 'ghetto' approach, elaborated by the Chicago School in the 1930s (Wirth 1938). This approach has been repeatedly criticized because particular urban areas cannot be looked in isolation from wider urban, regional and national levels (Gulick 1989:2). The focus of Latin American urban studies has moved away from questions of tradition and

conceptualize an entity-unity of 'Polanco' in historical and emotional ways. But 'micro level' case histories, people's use of words, and specific family relations challenge this anthropologist's and native unity. People's representations of space and time, of the boundaries of membership in different groups, and of different use of medical systems divide this postulated unity/uniformity into multiple levels of identity, and the anthropologist therefore becomes more aware that an entity called Polanco is essentialized in some context and de-essentialized in others. This thesis does not offer a 'final' analysis of what identity is in Polanco, but shows instead the different ways in which it is possible to interpret relationships there, and how boundaries of identity and self-awareness²⁸ are differently defined as a result.

modernity towards interest in formality and informality and urban spaces as loci of production and consumption (Edel 1992).

²⁸ Self-awareness can exist only when we are in relationship, not before it, because 'ontological awareness' (which takes place through reference points in the doing of everyday life) is prior to self-identity: relationships, discovery of the other (intersubjectivity), are prior to subjectivity (Giddens 1991:48,51).

0.4. PROCESSES OF IDENTITY IN POLANCO

This final section of my introduction is dedicated to a brief review of the contents explored in each chapter, introduces interconnections between different areas of analysis, and summarizes some of the findings which will be developed in the Conclusion.

The first chapter introduces the neighbourhood of Polanco, which is placed in the wider context of the urbanisation of the city of Guadalajara. Polanco cannot be described as a 'marginal' neighbourhood in the city. It plays the role of a 'centro de la periferia' (suburban centre) for a vast part of the southern suburb due to its history (a well-known case of social mobilisation), its 'images', and the kind of goods and services provided. Processes of acquisition and negotiation of legal rights by the neighbourhood during a long-running land dispute has had considerable importance for individual and group identity, especially for the people involved in the *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* (CEBs). The ways in which some people in the neighbourhood either hold on to or reject that 'historical' past reveal different ways of conceptualizing the past and present of Polanco and different balances between its 'personal' and 'collective' aspects.

The second chapter deals with notions of continuity and fragmentation of the self in the ways in which people talk about and experience such spaces as the home, the neighbourhood, the city and places of origin, and the ways in which these places are represented in time. Migration is described as an experience of self-empowerment, or of loss of power, and places become symbols of living, thinking and feeling. The process of migration and the experience of settlement in Polanco seem for many an acquisition of 'knowledge' about the world, and - for those being involved in social movement - a passage from a stage of not 'thinking' into one of 'thinking'. At the base of different representations of places and spaces there is an 'urge' (as well as a pressure) to belong. Boundaries of the self between private and public, individual and family, past and present may not be so clear-

cut.

The third chapter deals with religious identity and addresses some questions about human and divine agency, notions of human growth, responsibility, 'knowledge', action and contemplation in the everyday life of the community. Tensions between a Catholic universal notion of human nature and a belief in the existence of a distinct, underprivileged, social formation (the **pueblo**) creates polarisations and conflicts among laymen and clerics in Polanco. The chapter discusses the relation between clergy and laymen by focusing on the negotiation of power between laymen, Jesuits and diocesan priests. People involved in the CEBs perceive a tension - to different degrees, for members and leaders respectively - between 'traditional' and 'new' Catholic Churches. But hierarchical relations between clerics and laymen that have arisen from the control of 'power' of knowledge shows a parallelism - to a certain degree - in both the 'new' and the 'traditional' tendencies within the Church.

The first part of chapter IV addresses notions of illness causality in relation to moral agency and beliefs, and consequent allocation of blame and responsibility for disease. Leaders and members of a group of **medicina popular** (a CEBs oriented group), the activity of a **curandero** and the beliefs of a few people involved actively in the 'traditional' Church, show distinct correlations between different etiologies and ideas of social, individual sin and redemption. The second part of the chapter addresses some issues about the 'allopathic' use of homoeopathy and the different balance that homoeopaths and patients hold, respectively, between aspects of 'science' and 'faith' in the homoeopathic process. Both the leaders of the group of **medicina popular** and the homoeopaths tend to polarize etiological knowledge, the former as between a social and individual concept of sin, the second between scientific and healing aspects of homoeopathy.

Chapter V discusses the life cycle ritual performed for the fifteenth birthday of girls and the role played by the time 'of illusion' which begins with this ritual. CEB- oriented

parishes privilege the communal celebration over the individual 'consumption' of such a ritual, and emphasize the content rather than the form of the ritual. But the *fiesta*, as well as the religious ritual, are performative experiences which are important for a girl's and her family's social empowerment. The sexual and bodily symbolisms of the ritual do not fully explain the implications of the ritual for female and family identity. These aspects need to be understood within particular sets of family relations which enhance specific female images, family respectability and status differentiation within the neighbourhood.

In common language, the female time of 'illusion' is ended with marriage - the time of 'reality'. In chapter VI I argue that 'traditional' gender identity for women rests on motherhood, on experiences of self-abnegation, service and in being a link for family relations rather than an autonomous agent per-se. Resistances to 'traditional' gender roles are expressed at the level of language, social representations, psychological states and the body itself. But resistances to 'traditional' gender identity on the part of younger generations do not conform to an evolutionary process tending towards new, emancipated values of women's autonomy. They express challenges of degree rather than of kind, because physical proximity and care are still central to female self-identity.

Important threads run throughout the chapters which point to domains of self and identity. The process of self and group-identities cannot be described as an evolution between what is considered 'traditional' and 'new' in social, religious and medical terms. 'New' and 'traditional' elements are often combined rather than polarized in the plurality of options taken in everyday interaction. Specific actors in Polanco who polarize these terms, often aim to validate knowledge by doing so, and, thus, to make it accessible to some and denied to

others²⁹. Belonging in Polanco is central to the sense of oneself, and of family: however, what one belongs to is contextual and a matter of continual redefinition. Concepts of autonomy and self-sufficiency of the individual are not a useful tool of analysis. Boundaries of the self - especially for women - cross boundaries of moral responsibility and individual will, and make self-identity rooted more in personal and family interconnection. Moreover, Theology of Liberation evangelisation in Polanco has had an impact and has been a challenge for people's sense of self and identity. It has led to an encounter between a sense of self constituted by 'giving meanings' to actions and communal contents (e.g in ritual) with a sense of self that is located more in its performative aspects, rather than in reflective experiences.

²⁹ Rather than be critical of long-time-dead modernisation approaches, I think it is important to look at how 'traditional' and 'new' transform and coexist in the pluralism of choices made by active agents. It is more useful, then, to address the issue of power relations involved in the definitions and uses of such terms.

CHAPTER I: POLANCO A NEIGHBOURHOOD 'IN TRANSITION'

This chapter features a brief history of the urbanisation of Lomas de Polanco since its formation in the middle 1950s and places this neighbourhood within the wider process of urbanisation of the city of Guadalajara. In Guadalajara Lomas de Polanco is a typical example of a **colonia popular**¹ in 'transition' between being a very poor, underprivileged neighbourhood and becoming a 'suburban centre'. This 'transition' is embedded in the history of its social mobilisation and in the socio-economic dynamic of its population. The former has made the neighbourhood a famous case of resistance of owners of small plots against a combination of private and public interests (about rights of land ownership, see Morfin 1979, Sanchez Van Dick 1979). The latter ought to be taken into account in analysing why the response to calls for social mobilisation has decreased in the nineties.

1.1. GUADALAJARA AN EXPANDING CITY

Guadalajara, formed in 1532, has been a major administrative centre since early Spanish colonisation, but its increased urbanisation is a relatively new phenomenon because the population of the city expanded ten-fold between 1940 and 1980 (Vazquez 1990: 52). Guadalajara has been distinguished by religious and economic conservatism, and this economic tendency has been challenged only in the last few years by the expansion of multinational activities in the **corredor industrial** south of the city.

Since the second half of the sixteenth century Guadalajara - founded on an indigenous settlement² - has been a

¹ A **Colonia Popular** is a low-income neighbourhood which can be of recent or old formation. Its degree of economic homogeneity can vary but the term 'popular' refers always to its class composition.

² Guadalajara is divided into four sectors which can be related to the location of four indigenous villages (existing since pre-conquest time): San Juan de Ocotan, San Martín de Las

centre of concentration of ecclesiastic and government powers. The indigenous population was decimated in the 16th and 17th centuries while Guadalajara became an important centre for Spanish government activities and economic trade. During that time its importance was second to cities such as Mexico City, Puebla, and the mine towns in the central region of Guanajuato and Zacatecas (Berthe 1970). In 1708 the town became the capital of the region, and soon after the 'Real Consulado'- which controlled the administration of all business and trade activities in Western Mexico in the name of the Spanish Crown - was transferred to the city. Since the 18th century the economy of the town and the region of Jalisco has been based on agriculture, which served the central and Western regions, and on the production of non-durable goods such as textiles, shoes and foods (De La Peña 1986).

The real economic and social growth of the town began in the nineteenth century. After Mexican Independence in 1821 a development of small scale industries took place sponsored, to a considerable part, by migrants from different parts of Europe. The social strata present in rural Jalisco and in Guadalajara after the Revolution were constituted of small, cattle-holding farmers (**rancheros**), who took over part of the land of the **hacendados** redistributed after the Revolution, as well as small merchants, shopkeepers, and government, church and military bureaucrats. The economic expansion of the Guadalajara region was facilitated by the construction of a new railway at the beginning of the 20th century which opened wider communication with the Pacific area and intensified trade with the United States (De La Peña 1986).

Migration to and within the region of Guadalajara has been strictly connected to land tenancy. Problems of land tenancy became particularly acute in the centre-west of Mexico during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1911). The Porfirian economic policy created conditions favourable to

Flores, Santa Ana de los Negros, Santa Cruz de Los Huertos. Their inhabitants still reveal indigenous features and costumes.

migrations. First it intensified mechanisation of agriculture and created pressure on food prices because production was directed towards exports rather than internal consumption. Pressure on agricultural wages pushed small landowners to increase cash-crops at the expense of staple crop production. This had great repercussions upon the self-sufficiency of the **campesinos** in periods of bad harvests. This situation conjoined with increased concentration of land under the **hacienda** system, created a rural mass of landless people unable to sustain their life from agricultural activities. Under the presidency of Cardenas (1934-1940) who promoted land reform, the creation of the **ejido**³ was an attempt to solve these problems. Nowadays there is general awareness of the failure of this land reform both at political and popular levels.

Guadalajara is now the biggest urban centre in the 'Occidente de Mexico' which includes the regions of Jalisco, Colima, Aguascaliente, Nayarit, Michoacán and Zacatecas. Since 1940 Guadalajara's population has doubled every ten years reaching two and a half million in 1980 (Arias 1985) and exceeding four millions in 1990⁴. The town is divided into four sectors by two major perpendicular roads: Hidalgo in the north west, Juarez in the south west, Libertad in the north east and Reforma in the south east. Originally those sectors

³ An **ejido** is a form of land tenure -inspired by the **calpulli**, a tenancy of communal land - which has particular social purposes. It is assigned by presidential command for the agricultural exploitation of a single person or a group of people who have the usufruct but not the right to sell, rent or transfer the property. This character of strict inalienability, specified in article 52 of the Law of Agrarian Reform, was eliminated by an amendment to the constitution promoted by President Salinas de Gortari in 1991.

⁴There is inconsistency between the data given by the INEGI (Instituto Nacional Estadística Geográfica y Informática) on the bases of the official results (1991) and the informal estimates (of the 1990 census) of the total population of the ZMG (Zona Metropolitana de Guadalajara). The lower official population figure has been interpreted as an alternative strategy to save on central government funds to the city because government allowances are given in proportion to the population (Craske 1993:59).

were, and to a certain extent still are, class-centred. Middle and upper classes live in the first two while the lower classes dwell in the neighbourhoods of the centre and in the other two sectors (Walton 1977). However, new low-income settlement areas have developed outside the ring roads, especially in the west of the ZMG, making Guadalajara less of an east/west 'divided city' as Walton defined it .

The exponential urbanisation has outgrown the boundaries of the municipality of Guadalajara⁵ (see appendix A). Guadalajara has attracted large numbers of migrants since the 1940s with the prospect of work in both formal and 'informal' sectors. Walton (1977) has argued that the redistribution of wealth in Guadalajara (related to the preponderance of middle/small industries and a handicraft type of economy) has resulted in a more egalitarian society in comparison with other cities such as Monterrey. While Monterrey has been characterized by entrepreneurial high-risk industrial investments, Guadalajara has been known for its cultural and economic tendency towards conservatism⁶. However, the condition of industry has been changing since the 1980s. A **corredor industrial** formed by larger, multinational companies such as Kodak and IBM has developed in the southern outskirts of the ZMG. These companies trade all over the world and their

⁵ The ZMG is now constituted by four **municipalities**: Guadalajara, part of Tlaquepaque (in the south-east), of Zapopan (in the north-west) and of Tonalá (in the north-east). The latest expansion of the urban area is in the south - the fast growing **corredor industrial** of Atotamulco and El Salto near the airport (Craske 1993: 58) .

⁶ The cultural conservatism of Guadalajara rests on the importance that the Church has had in the history of the town. This was clear in the case of the **Cristiada** (1926-1929) a popular protest movement, which developed in the region of Jalisco, against the post revolutionary state perceived as socialist and anticlerical. Moreover many folkloric characters of Guadalajara and Jalisco have been used as national symbols for identification of 'Mexican Culture' (e.g. **Charros** (horsemen dressed in special clothes), **Mariachis** (male folk singers)) using cultural expressions in stereotyped forms.

production rests on a network of **maquiladoras**⁷ based in the Guadalajara area. Duran and Partida (1990) point out that more **maquiladoras** have developed in regions such Jalisco in the nineties, due to a renewal of favourable factors: a surplus of labour, a good water system, a more developed infrastructure and political support from the government.

⁷ These are small - often home based - workshops, which receive subcontracts from larger companies to do a part of the production process of manufactured goods, assembling already made parts such as for example shoes, electric and photographic equipment (Escobar 1988). Originally they developed in the US border but now this system of production has spread in central areas - such in Guadalajara - where infrastructure and government policy are facilitating their installation (Duran 1990).

1.2. URBANISATION AND MIGRATION IN GUADALAJARA

The high rate of migration towards Guadalajara⁸ since the early 1950s has been the result of different factors such as the substitution of staple crop by cash crop cultivation, the freezing of official prices for basic agricultural products, increased unemployment in the countryside and the concentration of services and commercial activities in Guadalajara (Orozco 1989 in Gallegos Ramirez 1990)⁹. Migration towards Guadalajara -especially in the period between 1961 and 1971 - has concerned entire families rather than individuals (in comparison to migration to the United States). Those people who decided to migrate often relied on better economic and entrepreneurial resources or were more open to take the risk than their village-mates who decided to stay. 'Poverty' alone does not explain 'reasons' for migrating¹⁰. Migration from the countryside has been the major push towards extensive urbanisation in ZMG - an urbanisation that, as De La Peña (1992) points out, has privileged spatial expansion rather than intensification of population density. Recent urbanisation, however, shows movements of population from the already urbanized to the newly urbanizing areas: it consists of an

⁸ The age group between 20-29 constitutes the main body of migration from rural areas into urban ones. The group between 30-34 tend to have a greater influence upon the migration between small and larger urban areas, while overall the band between 35-39 has a lower rate of mobility compared to the other two groups (Arroyo 1986).

⁹ Migrants have arrived from rural area or small towns, mainly in the states of Zacatecas, Michoacán, Distrito Federal and especially Jalisco. Up to the mid 1970s nearly half of the migrant population came from **pueblos** and **ranchos** of the region of Jalisco (Winne and Velazquez 1987). The areas which have had the major rate of migration have not always been the poorest in economic resources because it is unequal distribution of wealth as well as general scarcity which triggers off processes of migration.

¹⁰ 'Nothing is explained by the affirmation that poverty is the principal cause of rural migration, because poverty is a symptom of the existence of an underlying economical process, and there are poor areas that, until recently, expelled little manual labour' (my translation) (Gallegos Ramirez 1990:39).

urban population expelled from expanded households already settled in the ZMG (Soria Romo 1991).

Urbanisation of the ZMG has evolved around connivance between the private and the public sectors (Walton 1977, Craske 1993: 56), breaking local planning laws to the detriment of low income settlers (Varley 1989). The urbanisation/expansion of Guadalajara can be divided into three periods (De La Peña 1989). From the early thirties to the middle forties urbanisation took place through unregulated private selling of land plots and in the absence of State control. The following period - which lasted until the middle sixties - still evolved around private land trading but State control manifested itself through the formation of **fraccionamientos populares** (more than two hundred were created during the fifties and the sixties (De La Peña 1989:9)).

The **fraccionamientos populares** created by a government law in 1953, were plots of land which could be sold privately for construction. The law guaranteed that, through a plan of the **ayuntamiento**, the following services should have been installed before the transfer of the individual plots: a system of potable water with house-meters, a system of electricity supply, a drainage system, street lighting, street kerbs, tar pavements with a stony base, street naming, street trees, parks and recreation areas (Hernandez Obledo 1987:36). The cost of basic infrastructure should have been the responsibility of the **fraccionador** who should have included it in the cost of the land plot. However, this procedure was not respected in some cases such as in the **fraccionamientos Independencia**, **Tabachines** (Vazquez 1990:125-126) and **Polanco** (Morfin 1979).

The third period of urbanisation, from the middle sixties up to the present day, has been characterized by urbanisation in **asientamientos irregulares**. When the land assigned for **fraccionamientos populares** ran out the urbanisation of the ZMG expanded into **ejido** land¹¹. Legally the **ayuntamiento** should

¹¹ Since the early 1970, with the formation of **asientamientos irregulares** there has been an increase of **ejido** land occupation which, in the late eighties, had reached 15% of

not provide the basic services until the land is regularized. Therefore regularisation of 'irregular' lands has been a crucial dispute in many *asientamientos irregulares*. Varley (1989) has pointed out that there have been middle and higher-income settlements in Guadalajara which have received services before being legalized so that regularization is a matter of who says what is irregular rather than being just a status of the land. Settlement illegality, therefore, is a politically designated arena used by public bodies to marginalize 'illegal' settlers in low-income areas - illegality being used as a reason for not providing services (Varley 1989).

Popular urban movements (e.g. CPS - Comité Popular de Sur, MUP, Movimiento Urban Popular), religious groups (such as the Jesuits, the religious affiliated centre SEDOC -Servicios Educativos De Occidente and IMDEC -Instituto Mexicano de Desarrollo Económico Comunitario) and opposition political parties have often played an important role in defending the rights of the *colonos*. The State on its side has threatened small land owners in possession of *ejido* land through the action of CoReTT (Comisión Regularizadora para la Tenencia de la Tierra) - a public organisation with an independent budget, established by Presidential act in 1973, which has the ability either to regularize land tenancy or repossess it¹². Disputes about regularization and repossession may affect settlers both in *asientamientos irregulares* and in *fraccionamientos populares* (see case of Polanco below). Recent¹³ migrants from outside the ZMG as well as families which have been expelled from the urban settled area because of

the total area of the city (Vazquez 1990:53).

¹² Varley has pointed out that CoReTT was initially constituted as an urban agency to promote urban planning and growth, but it turned out to be an agrarian agency limiting its task to land regulation (Varley 1992:16).

¹³ I use Muñoz's (1981) categorization of migrants in relation to their time of settlement in the city: recent (those who arrived in the last ten years), intermediate (between ten and twenty), old (over twenty), native by adoption (born outside but grown up in the city).

their reduced buying power in the house market (Soria Romo 1991), constitute the body of settlers in the **asientamientos irregulares**. In contrast, old and intermediate migrants - with a lower rate of migrant return to the land of origin - constitute the population of **fraccionamientos populares**. Migrants' employment is both in the formal and informal sectors nonetheless, since the beginning of the 1980s, the 'informality' and the insecurity of the job market in Guadalajara has affected the majority of the low-income population¹⁴. Since 1982, the debt crisis has reduced the real purchasing power of wages rather than the number of jobs available in the market and has caused a polarisation in working conditions¹⁵.

The effect of the *economic* crisis has touched different fields of the life of the urban 'poor': consumption has dropped and productive activities, whose end products were acquired in the market, are now carried out within the household unit and education of young people, especially female, is sacrificed if the weight of domestic work cannot be undertaken by working mothers. Gonzales de La Rocha (1986, 1990) has pointed out that in periods of crisis the stage of the household life corresponding to the extended family (e.g. when a young couple lives virilocally) expands; in this way Gonzales and Escobar (1988) have observed that resources are pooled, and social relations within same households are strengthened .

¹⁴ Nowadays the period of migration to Guadalajara is not proportional to the amount of income earned (Soria Romo 1991) because recent migrants have a higher degree of education than old or medium migrants (Arroyo et al. 1986).

¹⁵ '...While in 1982 segmentation was a question of variation at the level of remuneration and job security offered to different types of work (migrant versus native, illiterate versus educated, man versus woman) with the factories using the same kind of labourers, in 1985 there is a new dimension of segmentation between secure jobs in large enterprises and the insecure employment of the workshop' (Escobar 1988:19).

1.3. THE COLONIA 'LOMAS DE POLANCO'

In the following sections I will sketch the major changes that Polanco has undergone since its formation, with particular reference to the process of urbanisation, problems of land tenure and popular mobilisation, provision of basic services, demographic and socio-economic changes. Polanco used to be a very poor settlement, highly populated and with a shortage of basic services. Nowadays, the ground of the urban mobilisation which took place in this neighbourhood -and made it famous in the history of Guadalajara's urbanisation- has changed. Polanco is a 'centre for the suburb' where an increasing number of houses are partly reconverted for commercial purposes and where the socio-economic level of the population is becoming more heterogeneous. Consequently, groups which have organized past and present urban mobilisation, have had to revise and question their line of strategies.

1.3.1. THE SETTING

Lomas de Polanco is a **colonia popular** situated in the south of the city of Guadalajara (see map # two in Appendix A) close to the old industrial area¹⁶. On the west and east sides it is bounded by two big avenues: the old Camino Real a Colima called now Avenida Colon and the Avenida 8 de Julio which continues up to the Cerro del Cuatro. In the north it touches the middle, lower/middle class **colonia** 18 de Marzo, while in the south-west, south-east and east it is surrounded by the **colonias** Lopez Portillo, Patria and Echeverria. Those neighbourhoods are more recent settlements than Polanco. However, some of these **colonias** have been provided with facilities such as a pavement and an efficient drainage system which Polanco has not yet obtained (see below).

Polanco covers an area of 106 hectares (Morfin 1979) and

¹⁶ The old 'area industrial' (industrial area) developed by the sides of Avenida 8 de Julio, which is just north of Polanco. However, there are a good number of small factories in Polanco itself, which produce, for instance, wooden furniture and shoes, as well as a home-based **maquiladoras** where clothes are cut and sewn.

it consists of 104 **manzanas** (individual sections of a grid pan). There are five main long **calles** (streets) which cross the neighbourhood east-west: **la uno**, **la tres**, **la cinco**, **la siete** and **la nueve**, plus two shorter: **la once** and **la trece** (see maps # three and four in Appendix A). North to south the **calles** are divided in even numbers from **la diez** up to **la cincuentaicuatro** just before Avenida Colon. The **calles** are also named, but people keep on using numbers to locate different parts in the colonia. The core of Polanco is along the **calle siete** where all the major economic activities take place.

Polanco looks distinctive from other **colonias populares** in the south of city for two main reasons. Firstly nearly all its streets are still paved with pebbles which make the space distinctive from the tar-paved or unpaved area of the nearby **colonias**. Secondly there is a relative large amount of green because some of the **calles** are adorned with trees. In front of the parish of the **Santa Magdalena**, between **la dieciséis** and **la treinta**, **la cinco** and **la tres** there is a park called 'el mono' (literally the monkey) after a bust of a minor Guadalaajaran poet displayed there (see map # five Appendix A). The park is a meeting point for the **drogadictos** (drug addicted) and it is recognized as one of the most dangerous places of Polanco at dusk and during the night¹⁷. People who live facing the park (as well as groups of **drogadictos**) organized by the OCIP (Organización Colonos Indipendientes de Polanco) have taken care of the maintenance of the flowerbeds.

The architectural development of Polanco is varied; the houses are built with one, two or, rarely, three floors. The older houses were constructed with **adobes** (sun dried bricks), the new ones are made of **ladrillos** (industrially prepared bricks). In a **fraccionamiento popular** the regular **lote** (basic piece of land) sold should be at least 90 square metres. In Polanco the size are smaller (8x10 or 4x20), and it is common

¹⁷ For a discussion of the representations of violence and marginality in the eyes of the people living in Polanco see chapter II.

to encounter paired houses built on half of the plot. Extensions on the ground floor have often been carried out with different materials, so neither colours nor techniques match. These extensions have been built with different purposes: to provide extra space for a new business or for newly married children. These afford new couples a shelter for the first years of marriage while they can save aside to buy a lote and then build their own house in a nearby colonia.

The appearances of the houses tend to show a division between those 'que la han hecho', (who have made it) and those who have not. Some houses are well decorated both inside and outside and even have car space, but others may not even have a sewer system or running water; it is common to encounter families still living in *viviendas*, where unrelated nuclear families live in separate rooms often sharing bathroom and *lavadero* (for washing clothing by hand). However, in some specific cases (see the case of the *curandero* Don Enrique in chapter IV) the poor, undecorated, countryside appearance of a house can be used to represent the humility and connections with rural knowledge of its dwellers.

1.3.2. URBANISATION AND PROBLEMS OF LAND OWNERSHIP

The **colonia** Lomas de Polanco is a **fraccionamiento popular** inhabited since 1953, but its status as such was recognized only in 1959. The disputes around land ownership and provision of services in Polanco have made the history of this neighbourhood a prominent case in the process of urbanisation of the city of Guadalajara. The urbanisation of the **colonia** Lomas de Polanco is interesting for three reasons (Morfin 1979). The land on which the **fraccionamiento popular** Lomas de Polanco had been built is - at least in part - **ejidal**; the relation between the **colonos**, **fraccionador** and public authority is representative of the type of connivance between political and economic powers which has also taken place in other **colonias** of the ZMG. Thirdly, the **movimiento popular** in Polanco - born out of a struggle for the installation of a better sewage system and coordinated by the Jesuits through the **Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs)**¹⁸ - has become a key example in the history of urban movements in Guadalajara.

Between 1927 and 1934 by a presidential decree, the **ejidos** of Santa María Tequepexpan and El Polanco were given in possession to a group of **campesinos**. The actual **colonia** de Lomas de Polanco extended into the **ejido** de Santa María de Tequepexpan. Regardless of this, in the middle fifties, Jaime Alberto Gonzalez - the owner of Guadalajara's newspaper **El Diario**¹⁹ - in a very unclear and fraudulent way acquired the property which was then transformed into a **fraccionamiento popular** (Sanchez Van Dick 1979). 'Legally', it appeared that

¹⁸ De La Peña points out that religious organisations have been particularly central in the process of urbanisation in Guadalajara because of the lack of alternative associations. Extended migrant families have not settled in the same area, but have been dispersed in the urban area through a high rate of urban internal migration due to the tight control (before the formation of **asientamientos irregulares**) on land urbanisation. Secondly ethnicity has not been a catalyst for urban affiliation because of the cultural homogeneity of migrants' origins (De La Peña 1992: 576-577).

¹⁹ The newspaper was used throughout the controversy of the land tenancy to discredit the image of the active **colonos** in the eyes of public opinion.

Jaime Gonzales acquired part of this land from an obscure owner and received another part as a donation, but in any case the land described in the legal document did not correspond to what was then sold as the **fraccionamiento** Lomas de Polanco (Morfin 1979). In 1959 to defend himself from possible subsequent accusations of fraud the **fraccionador** created a society called '**Fraccionadora Lomas de Polanco de Guadalajara**'. Once the **fraccionadora** began to sell **lotes** he claimed the right to install basic services from the **ayuntamiento** of Guadalajara, even if he was actually selling properties that he did not legally own.

Gonzales charged the plot buyers for the services that should have been installed forthwith at his and the municipality's expense. Nonetheless, the first settlers had to wait until 1961 to see the street grid plan²⁰ and the water system installed, and a year more to have the electricity connected, the pebbled pavement done and the central park laid out. In 1961 after rumours that the **fraccionador** had committed fraud, Gonzales changed the name of the society. The selling of the **lotes** continued, because no municipal action was undertaken either against him or the **fraccionadora** (Sanchez Van Dick 1979). The situation of the **colonos** was aggravated a few years later when the municipality wanted to charge the **colonos** again for the costs of the installation of the drainage system.

In 1974 the first request for **amparo** of the land in the ejido of 'El Polanco' - a juridical process guaranteed to individuals by the Constitution to defend their rights vis-à-vis State institutions - was submitted to the Federal Justice by a **colono** of Polanco. The legal judgement, which was in the end placed on file, did not solve the issue of ownership of the **tierras ejidales**. At the same time CoReTT threatened to

²⁰ Originally the **fraccionamiento** Lomas de Polanco was supposed to be for a middle class clientele. Therefore it had to be designed according to official urban standards rather than be left to unplanned urbanisation. Nevertheless, it became populated by low-income people because of its proximity to the industrial area.

intervene to sort out the legacy of the land ownership. CoReTT could have expropriated the **lotes ejidales** from **colonos** who believed that they had bought and owned the plots legally²¹. As an option, CoReTT wanted to re-sell the plots of land (which were, by then, already built-up) to the **colonos** at the current market price, not at the price prevailing at the time when they were initially possessed.

The political move of the municipality and of Guadalajara was to portray this land dispute as a form of invasion by the **colonos** and not as a fraud of the **fraccionador**²². Varley (1989) argues that even the focus upon the fraud of an individual subdivider can be interpreted as a governmental move to subdue the emergence of a wider movement of popular protest because in this way the government veils the bias of the public structures involved in the process of urbanisation.

Thus, from 1974 up to the beginning of the 1990s Polanco was a theatre for stronger and weaker pushes and pulls between **fraccionadora**, **Obras Públicas**, **ayuntamiento**, and **colonos** around the legalisation of land rights. Two main groups have been involved in the defence of the rights of the inhabitants of Polanco. The **Junta Municipal de Vecinos**²³, which has the support of the **Casa del Pueblo** - the leading organization of the PRI (the government party) in Polanco- has always acted in support of the line of the **ayuntamiento** using strategies of dividing the population through individual claims, to obtain

²¹ Nearly twenty years later the proportion of houses which have valid ownership papers is estimated as 76.1%, but 23.9% have still irregular papers, for instance, receipts of payments, **ordenes de escrituración** and other documents which are not official proofs of land property (OCIP's census: 1991).

²² The history of this legal dispute is complex and detailed and goes beyond the theme of this thesis. But it is important to point out the connivance between public and private sectors in violating constitutional laws about land expropriation, especially the article 27 of the Constitution, and that it happened because of connivance between the **fraccionador**, the municipal and the agrarian authorities (Morfin 1979: 194).

²³ Now called the **Comité de Vecinos**.



small reductions or better payment conditions. On the other hand a **Grupo de Representantes**²⁴ has confronted public institutions such as the **ayuntamiento** and the CCMG (Consejo de Colaboración Municipal de Guadalajara); thus it has striven for a unity of the neighbourhood using popular protest to back citizens' demands.

1.3.2.1. THE MOVEMENT FOR 'LA LUCHA PARA EL ALCANTARILLADO': A GLORIOUS PAST

The history of the **movimiento para el alcantarillado** (movement for the drainage system) shows a confrontation between different agencies which was resolved in favour of the **colonos** of Polanco. It created a case of popular mobilisation in Guadalajara which had an effect, both inside and outside Polanco.

The history of this urban movement can be divided into three periods between the beginning of 1975 and May 1977. The first stage - until the middle of 1975 - was a time of preparation and reflection within the recently formed groups of the CEBs. These small groups inspired by Jesuits - in 1974 they installed their training house in Polanco with the aim of being closer to the everyday life of the poor - were formed mainly by couples who met to reflect upon the application of the Bible to everyday problems. In that period the hygienic situation of the neighbourhood was very poor because the rubbish dump of Guadalajara was situated in the Cerro del Cuatro - the hill south of Polanco. During the rainy season (between May and October) water and garbage slid down into Polanco creating constant floods.

In 1975 Governor Alberto Orozco Romero announced a plan to install a drainage system, but the **colonos** discovered that they would have to bear the full cost of its installation. Moreover, the solicitor of the **fraccionador** Gonzales had

²⁴ The people involved in this group have continued to play a key role in the activities of the present organisation called the OCIP - Organización Colonos Independientes de Polanco - which has grown out of the experience of the CEBs at the time when the Jesuits were active in Polanco.

started to carry out repossession of the houses of those who were falling behind with their repayments (Morfin 1979).

In October 1975 some of the colonos organized themselves in a **Grupo de Representantes** to discuss which forms of organized resistance they could implement to face the urgent situation. They wanted to pay only a quarter of the charge for installation of the drainage. Moreover, they wanted to draw attention to the incompetence of the **fraccionador** and his duty to pay part of the installation. During this period political parties, such as the PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores) and the PCM (Partido Comunista Mexicano) unsuccessfully attempted to take advantage of the political mobilisation. The **ayuntamiento** tried to break the solidarity of the **Grupos de Representantes** through the support of other groups such the above-mentioned **Comité de Vecinos**. This committee claimed to have achieved the best for the population in obtaining a reduction of the fee for installation from the CCMG. In reality that reduction represented only 21% of the total amount (Morfin 1979).

In March 1976 the colonos received the first bill for the installation of the drainage system and the **Grupo de Representantes** decided to risk the possible juridical consequences of inviting people to stop the unjust charges. At the same time some of the colonos organized themselves and succeeded in defending those families which were under threat of eviction by the **fraccionador** for late payment²⁵. The situation of a tug-of-war between the **ayuntamiento** and the representative of the **fraccionador** ended with the 'victory' of the colonos after a mass mobilisation which saw more than three thousand people protesting in front of the government palace, as well as on occasions of visits of public officials' to

²⁵ A similar case of social mobilisation occurred in 1980. In that incident, through a network of rapid communication, people were called to block the activity of mechanical diggers with their bodies. The machines had been sent at night by the **ayuntamiento** to evict 38 families with the excuse/reason that the area had to be transformed into a recreation centre (Hernandez Obledo 1987).

Polanco. Victory resulted in an agreement that **colonos** had to pay less than a quarter of the original price claimed by the CCMG for the drainage system, which was then installed in 1978.

As far as the land issue is concerned, in 1984 the governor Enrique Albares Castillo signed a document recognising that fraud had taken place, and that illegal actions had been taken by the **fraccionador** in the **colonia** Lomas de Polanco. Nonetheless, this did not stop CoReTT from threatening to evict part of the **ejido** de 'EL Polanco' and 'Santa María Tequepexpan' in 1986 and 1987, but fortunately that eviction never took place.

Yet in 1992, the situation is still not completely clear. It seems that just one part of Polanco - the area between **la nueve** and **la once**, **la treinta** and the **Avenida Colon** - is **ejidal** and that only there can CoReTT potentially intervene. The **Grupo de Escrituración** of the OCIP²⁶ is defending the rights of the dwellers against such interventions. However, at the time of my fieldwork CoReTT intervention seemed more remote because of the promulgation of a constitutional change to article 52 which repeals the inalienability status of the **ejido** land.

The **movimiento para el alcantarillado** was a critical experience in the relation between State and civil society in

²⁶ The work of the OCIP is organized in a pyramidal way. A **Comisión Coordinadora** organises different committees. A commission **Grupo de Escrituras** deals with the problem of ownership of land (this is actually the group that receives most responses from the population at present). Another group deals with requests for amelioration of the public services such as transport. A **Comisión de Prensa**, and a **Comisión de Análisis** arrange workshops to disseminate general information about the political situation of the country and have the task of analysing how that level is related to the micro-reality of Polanco. The last commission organizes people in turn to take care of the park and have succeeded in a tenacious request to the **Obras Públicas** for a park improvement (the plan was presented in 1988) which was been carried out in 1992. Moreover a group of young people organize a cultural club in the OCIP called the **Garabatos** which publishes a bulletin and those aims are to 'recover' some cultural expressions of the 'popular tradition' especially that with mexican indigenous roots.

Guadalajara. The effects of the mobilisation of people spread beyond the limits of the *colonia*. Morfin (1979) argues that the action of the popular movement in Polanco became a thorn in the side of the municipality (it constituted a dangerous example for other *colonias* to follow about ways of claiming better services). The municipality responded by attempting to weaken it, by intensifying its inner divisions. The achievements of the *Grupos de Representantes* as a *movimiento popular urbano* became a stimulus for the formation of the *Comité Popular del Sur*, (CPS)²⁷. The *movimiento para el alcantarillado* obtained the acceptance of its demands without the mediation of already established local groups such as the CTM (Comitado de Trabajadores Mexicanos) which are central foci in the patron/client network through which power is allocated in the Mexican system. Moreover, as Sanchez Van Dick (1979) pointed out, the movement was a threat to the image of the CCMG, whose original request for full payment was discovered to have been illegitimate. Nevertheless, the development of this movement in Polanco suffered from the same problems which have affected the CPS and, in the second part of the 1980s, the MUP. A first weakness concerns the high rate of internal divisions about decision-making and the establishment of alliances. A second problem -pointed out by Ramirez Saiz - is the implementation by these groups of a defensive political action rather than putting forward new plans to shape urbanisation, administration and cultural environment in deprived urban areas (Ramirez Saiz 1992: 190-191).

²⁷ The *Comité Popular de Sur* was an urban popular movement formed in 1980 in the south of the city and composed of representatives of several *colonias populares*: Lomas de Polanco, Lazaro Cardenas, Lopez Portillo, Vincente Guerrero, Polanco Oriente, Echeverría and la Longaniza (Hernandez Obledos 1987 p.102).

1.3.2.2. SOCIAL MOBILISATION IN THE 1990S: A MOMENT OF REASSESSMENT

Those who work in groups of social mobilisation, such as CEBs and OCIP, complain that people in Polanco are less active in the 1990s than they were in the 1970s. In fact social mobilisation in Polanco has decreased considerably since the mid 1980s. It has been difficult for these groups to grasp changes that the *colonia* has been undergoing and to find a language that still has an impact on the population.

A language which aims at promoting solidarity among the underprivileged, to fight for amelioration of services, is not so successful as it was in the 1970s, although the neighbourhood still has an inadequate pavement and an inefficient drainage system. Different causes for this 'apathy' are identified by the *colonos*. On the one hand, the population involved in the church had been confused by frictions generated between the new policy of the *cura* (the head priest of a parish) of the Santa Magdalena and the Jesuits in Polanco²⁸. These reflect internal divisions between the diocesan and the Jesuit order. On the other hand people's priorities have changed and the message and the proposals of groups such as the OCIP encounter difficulties in meeting those changes.

Nowadays only about forty people still belong to the OCIP and a large part of this organization is constituted by the

²⁸ The plan of the parish of the Santa Magdalena enhances family cohesion as basic to prevent social disintegration. In Santa Magdalena the CEBs have a pastoral/evangelical aim to train *agentes de pastoral* to spread a social message, rather than organizing a collective socio/political action (such as SEDOC intervention in the Cerro del Cuatro). The line of *el cura* is different from the focus that the Jesuits gave to the *Comunidades de Base* during the time they worked actively within the parish from 1974 to 1989. Their objective was a pastoral commitment which led to the organisation and politicization of the community. The present priest of the other church in Polanco - the parish of the Anunciación - has taken an evangelisation line which is closer to the line of the Jesuits, but he has encountered different forms of resistance (see chapter III).

same group of people mobilized in the 1970s and 1980s. The OCIP was officially formed in 1990 out of the experience of the **Comunidades de Base**. Its centre of activity is a house built by the **colonos** in the late 1970s for the **Cooperativa Colonos de Polanco**. Part of the building is now used to store material concerning the history of popular mobilisation in Polanco and as a centre for the activities organized by the OCIP. The notion of a 'fight for democracy'²⁹ shapes the major objectives of the OCIP now: fair payments for the new pavement, improvement of the drainage system, and a definitive resolution of the problem of land ownership in Polanco.

At the beginning of 1992 there were only two Jesuit novices working with the population in Polanco and they were based in the cooperative. A novice organized the broadcasting of **Radio Pueblo** there. **Radio Pueblo** - 'la voz unida del barrio' (united voice of the neighbourhood) - was a small radio organized with the help of the SEDOC in 1989³⁰. The idea was to

²⁹ 'De ahí la urgencia de retomar la bandera de la democracia como eje de lucha de la OCIP....la OCIP, es un instrumento del pueblo, de este pueblo sufriente y combativo. En la OCIP, pretendemos que una buena parte de Polanco, nos conozca y se interese en contribuir en nuestra lucha, por ellos las puertas de la organización están abiertas' (From the statute of OCIP 1990).
(From this the urgency to take up again the flag of democracy as the OCIP line of fight...The OCIP is an instrument of people, of suffering and fighting people. In the OCIP we wish that a good part of Polanco would know us and would take an interest in our fight, to them the doors of the organisation are open).

³⁰ I use the past tense because at the end of February 1992 the Secretaría de Comunicación y Transporte - an organ of the federal government - put a ban on the radio because it lacked a valid, legal permit for broadcasting and therefore was breaking articles 523 and 524 of the 'Ley de Vías Generales de Comunicaciones'. Officers took away the material in the studio without negotiation. The organizers of the Radio realized it was more of a political move than a common bureaucratic routine. The radio had a small but expanding audience; many in Polanco did not know of its existence but the programmes contained disguised criticisms of the PRI and PRI/government intervention in the **colonia**. The broadcasting was also used to publicize the activities of the MUP in Guadalajara.

create a space for popular education where the *colonos* could participate through debates as well as through artistic performances. Programmes for children and housewives, as well as youth music and debates on question of direct interest for the people in the *colonia* were broadcast. However, relations between some of the members of the OCIP and the team of Radio Pueblo had been difficult.

It is clear that Polanco is perceived by the members of the OCIP as a differentiated world where some people are better-off than other; however, its members find it difficult to come to terms with the heterogeneity of the population. If in the 1970s urban mobilisation in Polanco evolved around metaphors of fights for democracy and shared poverty, in the late 1980s and early 1990s people resist identifying with such discourse.

Many people still feel they are poor but they do not see themselves as part of a 'category' of *the poor* as they did at the time of past social struggle. Many who were previously responsive to this type of discourse - based on opposition between the 'poor' and the 'state'- now feel this language to be distant from their present everyday problems. Their concerns are more with drug addiction and improvement of the level of education of their children rather than the inefficiency of the public services. Until the mid-1980s Polanco used to be a centre for criminality as there was serious confrontation between youth gangs, smugglers and corrupt police. The centre of this confrontation between the citizens and the government has now moved towards southern *asientamientos irregulares* in the Cerro del Cuatro. Thus the major task faced by the remaining members of the social movement in the *colonia* concerns the problem of finding a political discourse aimed at renewing their impact on Polanco's population.

1.3.3. SERVICES IN THE COLONIA

After the peak mobilisation of the middle/late 1970s Polanco saw a partial improvement of basic services. In the 1980s the transport system and education infrastructures were improved. Nonetheless there are still some deficiencies in services in Polanco compared to nearby **colonias** of more recent formation.

In Guadalajara, a metro system (**tren ligero**) has been operating since 1989 between the southern and northern poles of the ring road; many people do not use it to go to their place of work because it costs a third more than the **camiones** (buses). There are two bus routes - the most common means of transport - which pass through the neighbourhood and a few others which run along the Avenida 8 de Julio. Until the middle of the 1980s the bus terminal used to be in Polanco - on the **siete** at the corner with the **cincuenta** - but now many bus lines terminate in **colonias** further south. This creates problems of congestion at the times of the changeover of factory shifts, such as at six o'clock in the morning. Buses come down into Polanco already overcrowded, and it is common to see people hanging outside bus doors while the vehicle is in motion.

As far as educational services are concerned, in 1986 a second **secundaria** (three-year secondary school) started to operate in the neighbourhood. These two schools together with four **primarias** (a six-year primary school) - some of them doing double shifts - are enough to absorb the Polanco population as well as receive pupils from nearby **colonias**. But the teenagers who want to follow the **preparatoria** (high school), in order to enter University or qualify for a technical job, still need to travel outside Polanco.

In contrast to the sewage and drainage systems, the maintenance of the streets and the garbage collection are still deficient in Polanco. Garbage collection is organized by the municipality, but it is also provided by private companies. It is customary to tip the men who collect the rubbish; the amount given is often a point of gossip between neighbours. The

collection is often slow and irregular; the truck may not pass for weeks, creating inconvenience and problems of street hygiene.

Polanco - even if it is called 'Lomas de Polanco' (hills of Polanco) - is actually in a lower position than the southern border areas of the Cerro del Cuatro. The **bocas de tormentas** (special drains for the stormy season), which were promised by the CCGM in the 1977, have not been installed yet. A canal was built in the mid-1980s along the southern border to stop the flow of running water from the Cerro del Cuatro but this proved insufficient to stop the flood which particularly affects the area of **calles uno** and **tres**. Some residents of this part of Polanco have built small walls at their doorsteps to stop water from coming in. Nevertheless, this preventive measure is not always enough to keep water out and families are constantly in a state of alert during the rainy periods.

The uneven and disjointed pebble stone pavement (**empedrado**) does not help in times of flood. Up to the end of the 1980s, all the streets of the **colonia** had **empedrado**, which had the positive result of slowing down traffic. However, even if that gave a singular 'old-fashioned' beauty to the **colonia** many dwellers have often complained about the amount of dust that it causes and the danger of loose pebbles. The issues involved in laying a new pavement have become a renewed field of confrontation between the **colonos** and the municipality which wants to charge the plot owners for the cost of such work. At the beginning of the 1990s a tar pavement was laid out between the **once**, **trece** and part of the **nueve** (at the **colonos'** expense), but the **Grupo de Escrituración**³¹ has succeeded in stopping the continuation of this work. Its aim is to form a consensus in the population to claim the charge of the pavement from the **fraccionadora** and to reveal the inflation of costs budgeted by the **ayuntamiento**.

The general condition of the services in Polanco shows that although some services have been introduced since the

³¹ This group is part of the OCIP and deals with land dispute settlements.

1960s and 1970s, 'old' problems of lack and inefficiency are still present. These affect all the population of Polanco, but with particular severity those who live in the northern, lower areas. This situation should be understood within a wider scenario of the deterioration of the quality of life in Guadalajara. Craske (1993: 65) reports that, in low-income neighbourhoods, the population density has increased, but this has not led to a corresponding increase in social services. The policy to counterbalance this situation, promoted by the Mayor of Guadalajara, Covarrubias Ibarra, and the Governor of Jalisco, Cosío Vidaurre (both took office in 1989 and resigned in 1992, after a devastating gas explosion in the **sector Reforma**), has been to attempt to provide basic services to existing **colonias** and to prevent the formation of new **asientamientos irregulares**. State intervention, once more, has centred on quantity rather than quality of services, and Polanco is an example of a **colonia** where those services basically exist but their quality is deteriorating.

1.3.4. POPULATION CHANGES IN POLANCO

The population of Polanco consists mainly of old and intermediate migrants. Faster urbanisation growth in Polanco took place during the 1960s, but well into the 1970s many plots of land in Polanco had not yet been built on. People who were living in Polanco recall that time with feelings of nostalgia for the loss of the rural quality of space (see chapter II). But while the 1960s and 1970s were periods of the arrival of many new dwellers, the 1980s and early 1990s have been periods of consolidation and, to a lesser extent, of population 'expulsion'.

In 1979, the population was estimated (probably overestimated) by Morfin to be around 50,000; 82% of the inhabitants came from outside the ZMG and the average family composition was 6.0 (SEDOC 1981³²); 55% of parents of families originated from different parts of Jalisco. Less than 20% had been born in Guadalajara, and around 20% came from the regions of Michoacán, Zacatecas, Nayarit and Colima. The majority of these migrants spent their first years renting accommodation in other colonias south of the city (but more towards the centre) such as Morelos, Del Sur, Ferrocarril, and Fresno. Others arrived with relatives and lived some years in *vecindades* in the old neighbourhoods of the centre. Originally the population movement was from the centre of the city to the outskirts on the part of people who had been born and brought up outside Guadalajara.

Ten years later, the population in Polanco has decreased. In 1991, the population in the parish of Santa Magdalena's part of Polanco was estimated by the church to be 17,206^{32*}a

³² In the following sections I use data provided by censuses carried out by Morfin (1979), SEDOC (1981), the church of the Santa Magdalena (1991) and the 'encuesta des hogares' (households' census) of the OCIP (1991).

^{32*} In Polanco 73 *manzanas* come under the parish of Santa Magdalena and 31 under the Anunciación. The *manzanas* of the Anunciación represent 42.5% of the number of *manzanas* of the parish of Santa Magdalena. Using geographical proportion as a general indication of the population rate, the population of the parish of the Anunciación's part of Polanco could be

density of around 5.0 per household. In a partial census carried out by the OCIP (1991), the population census was 13,794 people for the 3,487 houses surveyed³³, so the estimated population in a total of 4,942 houses would be approximately 20,000 people. From both census the population of Polanco in 1991 is between 20-25,000 people, which is considerably less than the population estimates of 1979 and 1981.

These data - combined with the fact that in 1981 the population between 0-25 of age constituted 65.4% of the total population while in 1991 it decreased in the parish of the Santa Magdalena to 58.7 % - shows that the life-cycle of the family in Polanco is in a stage of consolidation. De La Rocha (1986) has argued that in the case-study of the *colonia* Rancho Nuevo, the well being of a family household is related to its stage in the domestic cycle (1986). The phase of consolidation takes place when there is an increase in the number of workers, as well as in the level of education of its members (Gonzales De La Rocha, Escobar & De La O Martinez 1990)³⁴. Part of this

estimated around 7,312 people making the total population of *colonia* around 25,000 people.

³³The census did not cover a zone which includes the houses that extend from Avenida Colon to the *calle treintaiséis* and between the *nueve* and the *once*. In the censused area data were collected for 3,487 houses; there were no data from 950 houses (nobody was there to answer). The area which was not surveyed covered approximately 505 houses, making 1,455 the total number of houses for which there is no information (29% of the total number).

³⁴The educational level is also an indication of social changes. The number of students in 1991 represents 23.4% of the population of the Santa Magdalena Parish. In proportion more people attend *secundaria* than in 1981 partly because nowadays factory employers ask for a *secundaria* diploma. One consequence is increased polarisation in youth job-opportunities in Polanco. Those of the younger generation who drop out of school and are unskilled become even more peripheral to the unsettled labour market; on the other hand another section of young people have access to better qualifications than their parents - their achievements become, in the long run, vehicles for improving the economic condition of the household.

consolidation is related to increased house tenancy.

In the 1981 SEDOC census, only 61% appear to own their house, while 38% were renting or borrowing it. In the 1991 OCIP's census (2,578 houses out of 3,758 censused) 79.9% owned their home and 20.1% rented or borrowed. Houses available for rent are fewer; people who rent complain that rent has increased considerably in the last couple of years. There are cases of families who have had to move out of Polanco because they could not afford to pay the rent.

The stage of consolidation then reflects a population movement different from the 1960s and 1970s: a movement from Polanco to the outskirts. In fact newly married couples - when able to - leave their parents' house in Polanco to buy a *lote* in the *asientamientos irregulares* in the Cerro del Cuatro or the better-off may get a flat in the areas south west of the city³⁵. This movement is part of an 'expulsion' which is caused by a rise in property-market values correlated to a growth of businesses in the neighbourhood.

1.3.5. THE 'CENTRALISATION OF THE SUBURB'

If in the decade of the 1970s Polanco became famous for its *movimiento popular* organized through the CEBs activities, in the 1980s its importance has grown as a centre for business and business trade. The expansion of diversified services has made this *colonia* a centre of attraction for nearby neighbourhoods and for the population of expanding *asientamientos irregulares* in the Cerro del Cuatro. Phenomena such as a decrease of population as well as an increase in property values, and the transformation of some dwellings into business properties constitute what I call the 'centralisation of the suburb'.

According to the 1981 SEDOC census, 44% of the working population in Polanco worked in factories, 30% were employed in private sectors such as building construction, and transport

³⁵ This accords with Soria Romo's (1991) study of the composition of the population in the *asientamientos irregulares* in the ZMG.

while only 7% worked in commercial and street-selling. At that time the proportion of male and female workers in factories was one to three; working women were employed in factories, or employed as *sirvientas* in middle class *colonias* in the west of the town. Until the early 1980s people preferred *trabajo de planta* (work in the factory) because the purchasing power of a factory wage was much higher than it became by the late 1980s and early 1990s³⁶. Since the economic crisis there has been increased employment in business/trade and in the informal sector.

In Polanco a large number of both men and women work in the 'informal' sector³⁷. Men tend to leave the work in factories of the *area industrial* because wages have not increased in line with the rate of inflation. Many factory workers are young unmarried people, who help to support their family, or married women with families in financial difficulties. Employers seek female labour because women are considered to be more reliable in doing their work and compliant.

The major phenomenon which has had important repercussions on the economy and the everyday life of the neighbourhood is the creation of a *tianguis* (street market) in 1985. It takes place on Wednesday and Sundays in the *calle siete* and it has expanded considerably in the last couple of years so that the centre of Polanco is completely blocked twice a week³⁸. Originally, the *tianguis* extended from the *dieziocho* to the *treinta*; by 1992 it reached from the *Avenida 8 de Julio* to the *cuarenta* with a few scattered stalls up to the

³⁶ In 1992 many workers in factories earn the minimum wage, which is less than 4 dollars a day. That does not cover people's necessities even if it guarantees National Health Insurance for a set number of members of the worker's family.

³⁷ In 1991 out of the active population of the Santa Magdalena, 46% were factory workers, 30% were employees, but 21.2% were commercial and street-sellers.

³⁸ People who live or used to live in *calle siete* complain about impeded access to their houses on these days and about the unhygienic state of the road after the market.

cincuenta. This market is a stronghold of the CROC union (Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros y Campesinos), and any decisions about the setting of the stalls needs to receive the agreement of the president of the *tianguis*.

Clearly the expansion of this market has had important consequences for the neighbourhood. The quantity of merchandise and the competitiveness of street prices have made Polanco a centre of attraction for many *colonias populares* in the southern part of town. Customers come for shopping as well as for other services such as medical and dental assistance³⁹. The street market has created a wider floating potential clientele which was not present in Polanco before 1985.

Pre-existing businesses in the *colonia*, however, have suffered from the expansion of the *tianguis*. Those who have good stalls in the market (the stalls can be taken by anyone within or outside the *colonia*, paying a toll to the organizers in relation to the size of the stall) or those who have well-furnished retail shops in *calle siete* are doing a good business. Traders in the permanent covered market (in the *calle siete* between *la treinta* and *la treintaiséis*) complain that there is too much competition and that sales are not too good these days. Those who tend to suffer from the competition are permanent stall-holders selling food, clothes and goods for the house at higher prices than the *tianguis*.

Another major consequence of the introduction of the *tianguis* is a rise in property values. *Calle siete* has become a very profitable business centre. Since the end of the 1980s domestic residences in this street have become rarer and the price of these properties has shot up. The urban structure of Polanco has changed because the central axis of the *colonia* has become a space for trade rather than a place for living.

Polanco, then, offers many services and goods which attract people from nearby *colonias* in the southern suburbs;

³⁹There has been a visible increase in both allopathic and homeopathic consultancies in Polanco since the late 1980s (see chapter IV). This increase is also related to continuously new clientele constituted by people visiting Polanco from other *colonias* in connection with the *tianguis*.

people no longer need to travel to the centre for major shopping and services at competitive prices. In the early 1990s a phenomenon of 'centralisation of the suburb' is taking place, but perhaps it will be challenged by the expansion of big shopping centres⁴⁰.

1.4. POLANCO IN THE 1990s

In the 1990s two phenomena appear clear in Polanco. Firstly the neighbourhood has been absorbed into the city of Guadalajara. When the first migrants settled in the early 1960s the neighbourhood was in the suburb of the city, while now it is considered part of the city itself. Secondly this expansion has encouraged the conversion of a relatively old suburb into a centre for new suburbs. Polanco, in fact, has become a *colonia* providing services for southern suburban areas of Guadalajara so that it is a centre in relation to nearby, more recently established areas.

It is impossible to forecast exactly how Polanco will develop during the remainder of this decade, but some features seem more prominent than others. The increased 'informality' of the market (Escobar 1988) is tangible in Polanco and has become one of the components of the process of 'centralisation of the suburb'. The socio-economic situation in Polanco is still difficult for many but not for all. The consolidation stage in the family life-cycle, the increased value of the land in Polanco, and the liveliness of business are some of the characteristics which are changing the identity of Polanco from a 'poor' into a more socio-economically diversified neighbourhood. Gallegos Ramirez (1990) has pointed out that in the ZMG many groups are still marginal to the system of service

⁴⁰ I do not know what will be the effect of Gigante -a big supermarket chain - which in 1991 opened one of its biggest branches between Avenida Colon and Avenida Patria. The supermarket has become competitive with smaller market businesses by being attractive and appealing to consumers rather than by offering lower prices. It seems to have had a negative effect on the small businesses in Polanco (more so in the *colonias* of Lopez Portillo and Patria) which are already under pressure from the presence of the *tianguis*.

redistribution, but they are integrated into the productive system. This type of marginality is still one of the key aspects which has inspired popular/political movements such as the OCIP, but people's perception of themselves as 'marginal' is changing.

The first migrants who settled in the **fraccionamiento** popular of Lomas de Polanco had to put up with a neighbourhood in formation - where basic services were installed slowly and incompletely and people had to fight for installation of an adequate drainage system as well as for the acceptance of their land ownership rights. So the history of Polanco is a good example of how, in Guadalajara, the rapid process of urbanisation has been a fertile ground for connivance between the interests of the private big landowner and the public governmental bodies.

However, the offspring of the old migrants are now acquiring skills in educational fields to which their parents did not have access. Nonetheless educational and social mobility is not uniform in Polanco, and many families still have to struggle with decreased buying-power and resort to the female labour force to sustain the income of the household (as Gonzales De La Rocha (1986) has pointed out in the case of Rancho Nuevo). Greater socio-economic differentiation has been taking place since the mid-1980s, and the poorest and most unskilled section of the population - especially if renting - has slowly been pushed out of the neighbourhood. Along with these socio-economic transformations go changes in people's perception of the present and past of the **colonia**, as well as, for the elders, the present and the past of their places of origin. The next chapter looks extensively at these boundaries of the self as loci of consciousness.

CHAPTER II: CIUDAD, COLONIA, PUEBLO AND RANCHO

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter features representations of different spatial entities which are fundamental to the people of Polanco¹ as well as to other **colonias populares** in Guadalajara. Representations of places and time introduce themes which concern boundaries of the self. Boundaries of the self as an individual, self-sufficient agent are not clear-cut in people's experience of 'private' and 'public' space and in the re-creation of 'past' images in 'present' events; notions of the self, therefore, should be studied at the level of family interaction and ideas of belonging.

Geographical spaces, which shift in relation to contexts in which they are perceived, are associated with particular ways of being and moral beliefs. Ways of talking about experiences in different 'geographical' spaces illustrate the process through which people map their world and give insight into their self-perception (Lynch 1960). Different images of the 'urban' and the 'rural' are present in Polanco, and representations of the rural are directly related to experiences in the changing dimensions of the urban.

The first part of the chapter is dedicated to a brief survey of approaches to the study of migration in Latin America to see which analytical tools might be useful in the Polanco case. Subsequently the ways in which the space of the home and the **colonia** is represented as known/unknown, secure/insecure space in the eyes of the colonos, and the image that Polanco has for outsiders are analyzed.

Diversification of the quality of space is present also

¹ In this chapter I use material from a few **pueblos** (villages) and **ranchos** (farms and agriculturally-based settlements) which are the places of origin of those families with whom I was in close contact during my fieldwork. The intention is not, therefore, to give an exhaustive portrait of the complex relations between Polanco and the multifaceted cultural regions which have given birth to many of the **colonia's** inhabitants.

in the representations of places of family origin that may be recalled with pride or with shame. These representations and mapping of the world have to be seen within the process of migration. This process may have implied self and family empowerment, and expansion of knowledge, but also fragmentation and loss of the ontological security (in the Giddens sense of the 'I' narrative concerning continuity and order of events in everyday life). The places of origin of migrants' families may assume different connotations for offspring generations. For those brought up there, such places may be associated with hard conditions of life, social expulsion or a nostalgic, 'lost' past. For their children they may be associated with a more flexible youth socialisation and courtship than the city.

2.2. MIGRATION AND BELONGING

Studies of migration in Latin America have focused either on structural or on psychological causality (Mahar 1989). Issues of self-awareness, world-views, and the re-enactment of the past in the present in the migrants' experience are much less developed areas of studies. The following sections look at the experience of migration and the representations of space and time as processes of learning and developing, both at personal and family levels. Migration to Polanco has both structural and psychological levels, and its effects on people's self-perception have to be analyzed in terms of notions of belonging.

Theories of migration can be divided into two main categories (Kearney 1986): those which focus on an individual-centred approach such as modernisation theories (e.g. Redfield 1947, Lewis 1966, Kemper 1977), and those which focus on structural, historical macro-economic factors (e.g. Frank 1971, Roberts 1978, Arizpe 1978, Muñoz & Olivera 1972, Escobar 1986, Escobar, Gonzales & Roberts 1987). Modernisation theories assume that migration can be explained in terms of individual psychological states, and that migration can be isolated as a self-contained phenomenon. The dichotomy modern/urban versus traditional/rural is studied through the analyses of 'push and pull' factors which should explain what attracts people to the urban life and repels them from their place of origin. Migrants are considered as rational actors who tend to maximize outcomes with reference to their goals, and, through the reification of psychological states ('Western' psychological states, as in a *campesinos* (peasants') study by Fromm, Maccoby 1970), their action is decontextualized from its historical-economic setting. The focus is on the description of the conditions of life in the countryside as 'backward' and on description of values, beliefs and expectation in relation to urban life. The root metaphors of this approach hinge upon notions of 'progress', 'development', 'acculturation' and

'backward' versus 'advanced'². The main problem of this approach is that it assumes both socio-economic homogeneity among the migrants and a universal notion of rationality. The population of Polanco cannot be described in linear terms, shifting from a 'backward' and traditional past to a more progressive future. In the following chapters, dealing with notions and experience of 'traditional' and 'new' in the religious and medical domains, it will become clear how these poles are contextually constructed, coexisting and redefined in everyday practice.

On the other hand, the historical structuralist approach focuses on macro-economic causes of migration, within capitalist industrialisation (Muñoz & Olivera 1972). Urban migration is studied from the point of view of the allocation of labour, class relations and changes in the agrarian structures, and is considered a necessary condition for the formation of an urban proletariat in capitalist development (Arizpe 1978). Urbanisation in Mexico has brought about technological dependence of the provinces upon a few large cities, and State intervention in favour of agrarian elite has forced the rural population to decrease its economic self-sufficiency and it has increased migrant labour (Roberts 1978).

However structural, class-based approaches to urban migration tend to underestimate the existence of counter hegemonic processes and overlook the diversification and the idiosyncrasies of the migrants' experience. Migrants often do not lose their cultural identity, but they create and recreate their local culture through associations or informal gatherings (e.g. see Altamirano (1984) for a case concerning Lima and Hirabayashi (1983) for a case in Mexico City). The creativity

² Querejazu's (1987) analysis of the discourse of the development agencies in Bolivia discloses some of the assumptions which are at the core of modernisation theories: ideas about the campesinos lack of knowledge (mistaking technical knowledge for ontological knowledge); different conceptualisation of time such as 'getting rid of the past' which prevents 'advance' versus continuously incorporating the past into the present; ideas of excluding uncertainties versus accepting them as a part of the life-process.

of the actors in shaping their own perceptions of the world is thus important.

The following sections focus on people's representations of their experiences during and after the process of migration, and on how these experiences influence people's representations of places of origins and the places they live in now. Collective boundaries cannot be assumed to be homogenously shared by the population, because representations³ of the past and the present assume different and often contrasting forms.

2.2.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF BELONGING: HOUSE SPACE

The experience of migration influences people's self-perceptions and the perceptions of the space in which they interact. The idea of belonging to a specific land, and of a territorial identification with a concrete space, are very important for people in Polanco; this can be discerned in everyday speech.

Being 'loose', or not-belonging, is defined as a negative characteristic. The term *vago* (which means roaming) is used to identify young people who take drugs or are the source of trouble. They do *vagancias* which are nasty things, such as stealing car radios, or smashing car windows.... Attributes of wandering - *vagar* - are commonly used to describe negatively-judged actions. The word *vago* is also used for unmarried boys/girl who act against their family's will, or for married people who do not meet up to the responsibilities marriage entails. It is important to remember that to be married - *ser casado* - comes from the root of house/casa. In this sense 'to be right' -*ser un buen muchacho/a*- is the opposite of *ser vago*. Being good is related to the notion of co-operating in the life of the household.

The idea of the house, of *one's own house*, is fundamental

³ Connerton (1989) stresses the centrality of ritual re-enactment of the past, and the representation of 'tradition' as central focuses for the construction of collective memory, both at cognitive and bodily levels. In this chapter I focus more on representations rather than on the re-enactment of the past in the present.

for most families in Polanco, and ownership is much preferred to renting. People's perception of social and emotional stability is associated with the physical house and the land on which it is built. However this association is changing over generations. Clara, a middle-aged woman born in the *ranchito* of 'El murillo', showed her concern about this change when her married daughter wanted to buy a flat in a block estate outside Polanco:

They want to buy a flat in the area of Jardines de la Cruz, but what are they going to own...the air! It would be better if they bought a small piece of land in the Cerro and built something there.^a

Recently-married couples are keen to go and live in small flats in the block estate, where communal services are rather poor and space very restricted. In these 'cellular' houses, space is organized in a different way from houses in Polanco.

In Polanco, as in many *colonias populares*, there is a general tendency to 'ruralize' space in the lay-out of the house. The room at the entrance is normally the best-looking room in the house, or the only one to have been 'done up'. It should look nice because it is what visitors *see* of the house. In this 'entrance' room - which can also be used as a bedroom at night - there are often pictures on the wall representing married couples such as the heads of the household or their married children. There can be Catholic images of virgins and saints as well as images of 'natural places'. These do not represent place of origin but are stereotypical, postcard-type landscapes. In some houses, the wall is entirely covered with different types of images, as if empty space were something to be covered (see picture # six, Appendix A).

Hunt (1989), analysing the differences in domestic life between working and middle class English households, points out that poor households use cheaper versions of the decorations used by middle class: the difference is not in design and colours but in material (Hunt 1989:77). This use of decor is very similar in Polanco. Households will display cheaper versions of nick-nacks, souvenirs and cult figures made of plastic or other cheaper materials. An artificial element -

such as plastic or hand made flowers - is present in ornaments for the house, if the household can afford to spend money on house-decorations.

When I asked women why they had chosen these decorations rather than 'real' plants I was told that 'they look nicer, and more refined'⁴. 'Real' plants can be found in the courtyard - el corral - where people tend to keep animals -such as rabbits, chickens or pigs and which is used as working or storage space. However, the balance between the house and the corral is reversed in contrast with the countryside. The latter is much less extended than in country houses: in rural areas, it is the centre of activity (e.g. raising animals, washing dishes, sitting and preparing the corn); in the city the shelter-area is the core of the house.

The kitchen, or the area which is reserved for cooking facilities, is partly reminiscent of rural life too. There is no wooden fire on which to place the comal (circular plate of metal used to heat tortillas), but the way in which the cutlery, and pots and pans are hung and displayed on the wall reminds one of the life in the rancho (see picture # seven, Appendix A). Utensils are not kept in cupboards and the eye can run along colourful pottery, hung on the wall, which is produced in the kilns of Tonalá and Tlaquepaque. There is a pleasure in displaying these devices which goes beyond practicality: Polanco is very dusty and things need to be dusted frequently. Rather than saving space, hanging kitchen utensils makes that space visible to a visitor's-eye.

Partitions within the house are often non-existent. Pader (1993), in a comparative studies of the use of domestic space among Mexican migrants to the United States, and villagers in rural Jalisco, has pointed out a contrast between dimensions of 'individualism' and 'familism' (1993:117). The use of domestic space in Mexico emphasizes interdependence,

⁴ In this case I was confronted with different ideas of beauty: my personal view of Nature as the most refined form of beauty and elegance versus their ideas of the human elaboration of a natural theme.

circulation of space, lack of separation between different parts and shows an orientation towards group rather than private, individual space and 'continual physical connections among households members' (Pader 1993:126). In Polanco, the existence of a separate space, such as a private room, is mostly unknown even to recently-married couple living in their parents' house. This may cause strain for young married couples who cannot enjoy any intimacy away from the eyes of in-laws.

The entire house is an available space for the members of the family and kin coming to visit. Toilets often lack proper doors, and relatives (normally of the same sex) tend to sleep together in the same bed, even when they are grown-up. There is also no division between adult and children's space. Children play and move in the same space where adults talk and interact, and there is continuous cross-cutting between these two worlds. Adults do not seem particularly annoyed by children's noise, and children find their own entertainment without relying on adult encouragement.

2.2.2. NEIGHBOURHOOD SPACE IN THE EYES OF OUTSIDERS AND INSIDERS

If people in Polanco see the inside of the house as a secure place, it is not so with the perceptions of 'outside' space. The majority of the inhabitants consider it unsafe to walk at night, especially through back streets. Not only women but also men can be assaulted, especially in particular areas near the park. The colonia has therefore two aspects: a daytime and a night-time one.

During the day the colonia is felt to be a relatively secure place. Labourers leave early for shift jobs, as do pre-university students. First thing in the morning, women sweep the calle in front of their houses. To leave the front door dirty is seen by neighbours as an indication of a badly-kept house. Food-stalls start their activities early in the morning, selling cooked breakfast near the central camionera (bus terminal). Shops open much later except on days of

tianguis. During daylight, women can cross the space to get to the market or pick up children, and the morning is dedicated to those activities which are considered to 'make a woman': sweeping, washing the floor, preparing food. In case of married women who are working, older daughters are in charge of the housework.

Around mid-morning, the *calle siete* of Polanco is full of activity. This time of the day is a moment when women can talk to 'strange' men more easily, and there are stories/gossip which describe women falling in love with men whom they first glanced at on their way to the market. Long queues are formed to buy *tortillas* or *masa* (basic corn dough) which people complain are not comparable in quality to those produced in the *rancho*⁵.

Many women affirm that during the day Polanco is similar to a *pueblo*, even if they feel that life is faster in the city. In Polanco, new business activities are set up as fast as others close down, and they are often run from front doors or from a conversion of the front entrance. This implies fragmentation of the market, increased competition and behind-the-back criticism about neighbours who run similar businesses. Many of these small businesses are carried out by women. The space allowed for much of women's interaction is the threshold. Women have to cross the space in the *colonia* with a purpose, they cannot simply hang around as men do, but they can interact from the liminal space of the threshold of the house. This also makes it possible to run a business 'without leaving the house'.

After dusk, the outdoor space is considered insecure, especially for women. In the evening, the central street is left to couples walking or eating at night food-stalls. People

⁵ Countryside life is associated with healthier, more natural food. The fact of leaving the *rancho* to come to the city has meant dietary shifts. Now lard is often replaced by corn oil, and fruit is more available though often expensive for the average household. *Comida chatarra* (junk food) is widely available and it constitutes, unfortunately, a considerable part of the daily dietary expenses of the family.

hold, to a greater or lesser extent, to 'rural' religious imagery of the Devil catching those who are in the street at night. This 'Devil' imagery is transferred in the urban context to the figures of the *vagos*, *los drogadictos*. They are blamed for the evil and disruptive side of the *colonia*⁶.

Nowadays the phenomena of *pandillerismo* and unjust police intervention⁷ in Polanco is weaker than five/ten years ago. The violence has seemed to gravitate more to peripheral *colonias* such as in the Cerro del Cuatro. The image of Polanco - as being a deprived and violent place - is slowly changing in the perception of the inhabitants of the *colonia*.

For a long time, Polanco has symbolized to a *tapatío* (an inhabitant of Guadalajara) observer, a prototype case of a dangerous *colonia*. Polanco has been described in the local press as a multifaced symbol: as an island of solidarity and place of struggle for urban rights:

In front of the house of government, neighbours of the *colonia* Lomas de Polanco..demonstrated yesterday against the high cost of the installation of services by the Consejo de Colaboración Municipal'.^b (El Occidental Sept.1975)

even as a dangerous cluster of rebels ready to bring Cuban revolution into Mexico:

In the journey that the reporter made through the streets of Polanco and Santa Cecilia, he discovered a series of slogans on the walls, in which people are encouraged to rebel; other slogans attack the military force, the police and the government^c.
(Consciencia Publica 1987)

Polanco is often seen as an outstanding example in the urban periphery's deprivation and marginalisation from civil society:

⁶ In people's comments when something wrong happens to a man the blame is normally placed on the 'evilness' of the *vagos* but if it happens to a woman there is implicit blame on her personal failure, (e.g. it happened because she should have not been there).

⁷ Living in Polanco, one learns to defend oneself from street hassle as much as from police intervention. The municipal police, whose wages are very low, often take away boys, harmlessly hanging around in the street, and ask for money or goods to release them.

CALAMITOUS POLANCO: Abandoned for 35 years, with
 Illegal use of land and unpaved streets,
 Indifference towards "major floods",
 Murders and ambushes committed nearly every day,
 it is a free land for drug addicts and criminals.^d
 (Headline from Sol de Guadalajara 1991)

But these images do not correspond entirely to the people's own perception of themselves.

Cohen (1985) has argued that the identity of a community is related to the experience of its boundaries in symbolic opposition to other-than-us. People's sense of self arises from the 'contrivance of distinctive meaning within the community's social discourse' (Cohen 1985:117). So communities are mental constructs whose symbolic boundaries allow people to 'think themselves into difference' (Cohen 1985:117). In Polanco the nature of symbolic boundaries varies from actors to actors because they depend on their intentionality in expressing different images of the community, and the contexts in which those images are evoked.

People express both a sense of love and of shame towards the colonia. Living conditions have improved but the appearance of the colonia has not improved as much as that of other neighbourhoods created at the same period or later. In some cases this 'backwardness' is accepted with pride in so far as Polanco has the characteristics of a **pueblo** rather than the wealthier 'modern' look of nearby neighbourhoods. These colonias - where some of Polanco's women work as **sirvientas** (house-cleaners) - are portrayed as less friendly places, where people do not know much about neighbours. The image of Polanco as a 'unity' is then stressed in contrast to different richer colonias. Nevertheless when comparison is made with a different 'other', other characteristics are emphasized.

For people who have experienced difficulties with their neighbours, Polanco is perceived as a more alienated environment, even in comparison with 'poorer' neighbourhoods. Here a young teenager from a poor family complains that her mates in Polanco are often snobbish:

Young people are very presumptuous and snobbish here, for this reason I get along better with the people in Echevarría, because people there are

simpler.^e

Some of the people who are more in need - often renting accommodation - argue that in Polanco people used to be more helpful, but that now they have become more 'self-oriented'. Yet antithetical images of the *colonia* coexist with this sense of increased selfishness. The case of Don Jesús (see below), shows that in Polanco the space can be perceived as a not unkind environment. In his street, people are supportive in cases of need, street-activities are organized, such as the *Posadas* (Christmas parties), with the collaboration and contribution of all the families in the street. Moreover, families keep an eye on each other's property so that strangers are quickly detected. People in his *calle* claim to have established ties of trust and confidence (*confianza*) with their neighbours similar to those in their *pueblo*.

A key to explaining these contrasting perspectives on the environment is the history of Polanco as an area of strong development of the *Comunidades de Base* (Base Communities) during the 1970s and 1980s⁸. *Comunidades* have had to face a strong sense of particularism - the feeling of belonging to the place of origin rather than Polanco and the lack of ties with neighbours in urban areas⁹. A sense of a 'common' identity has been created through group participation in the *colonias* rather than through inherited native qualities.

Perceptions and the viability of house and neighbourhood space in Polanco then, relate to boundaries of the self within the family, the community and across gender. Ways in which

⁸ The *Comunidades* work at the level of street-based groups. The perception of the street as a 'world on its own' has been enhanced by this biblical reflection movement and those streets which have, or used to have, a strong group of biblical reflection have maintained a stronger character of mutual help than other streets, where the group was not strong or even absent.

⁹ I pointed out in chapter I that the control of land invasion through the establishment of *fraccionamientos populares* in the urbanisation of Guadalajara has made the settling of kin in neighbouring areas difficult (De La Peña 1990).

domestic and neighbourhood space are conceived of cannot be separated from subjects who experience it and construct its boundaries symbolically in opposition to the space of 'others'. We now turn to perceptions of the city as a whole in the experience of the migrants and their offsprings to see how those boundaries are shaped.

2.3. COMING TO THE CITY: AN EXPANSION OF KNOWLEDGE

Migrants' 'adaptation' to urban life has been the focus of 'culture of poverty' analysis of urban life since the writing of Lewis (1966). Later studies have shown that migrants do not form passive and enclosed communities within wider urban life, but they are active actors (Lomnitz 1977) in the political (Cornelius 1975) and economic life of the city. This active role is detectable also in people's changing imagery of the city and the role of this imagery in shaping self-identity. Notions of 'expanding knowledge', of 'hardening the heart', or of acquiring self-empowerment become important elements in understanding how experiences of migration shape people's mapping of the world and their self-consciousness.

Physical occupation of a space/place does not necessarily mean a sense of belonging. The perceptions of generations born or raised in Polanco are different from those of their parents brought up in the countryside. Nevertheless the influence of the rural background of their parents is still strong on young people, often creating conflicts between generations, especially in the fields of gender relations and religious beliefs. To explore the way in which 'rural' roots feed into 'urban' culture in Polanco particular attention is given to that age group which personally experienced the 'rural' in their childhood or adolescence.

The city of Guadalajara represents one term in people's experience, but perception of the city is filtered through the experience of the **pueblo** and the **rancho**. Generally speaking, the term **pueblo** refers to a middle-sized and small village, while **rancho** refers to a cluster of isolated houses in the countryside (see below). **Pueblo** means also population, so it defines both a geographic space and a human bond between people.

Tonkin has pointed out that the process of the formation of the self is related to memory, cognition and history, and that it is also shaped by the genre used to recall and represent such memories (Tonkin 1992:50). The understanding of the past, then, is closely connected to the process of

recalling in a social context, because in that process the self is both the subject of the narrative and the agent-narrator. Memory is, then, not only a mental act, but an act of encoding semantic, visual and verbal and bodily experiences to construct a narrative (Connerton 1989)¹⁰. The experience of coming to the city is described through personal idiosyncratic memory. Often I encountered some resistance to making people talk about such experiences when it stirred up a great load of intense emotions or when the act of narrating the personal past was felt to be alien to people's everyday contemporary life.

Coming to the city may have been a shocking experience, but it is also an awakening one. In many cases the city becomes an anthropomorphic agent - having human qualities - in itself:

In the city everything is done, if somebody is unprepared, the city eats a person from the countryside. (Doña Chiaio)^f

The city is also a morally dangerous place:

In the city there is not freedom but libertinism. In the rancho there are not bad people because everybody needs everybody else. One can leave the children free; there are no drugs, nor perdition, as in the city. (Doña Chiaio).^g

In this sense the **pueblo** and **rancho** are conceived of as secure places in contrast to urban deprivation, violence and drug-addiction. Doña Chiaio is married, but her husband is not a very good breadwinner and often drinks and gets himself into trouble. So she is the one in charge of the organisation and the economy of the household and the one who has authority over the upbringing of the six children. Her constant effort is to smooth family relations and at the same time see that her younger children do not get into trouble. Her experience of the urban environment for the upbringing of the children is of

¹⁰ Connerton (1989) distinguishes three different types of memory: personal (object of one's own history), cognitive (meaning related to knowledge of our past experiences), and habit memories (acting out memory in a particular performance). The first two require reflectiveness on the part of the subjects involved in doing the recalling, but acting out memory does not require such reflectiveness.

potential violence and danger.

However this contrast between the city and the **pueblo/rancho** does not always coincide with people's actual experience. I was surprised to find that many of the reasons given by people for moving to Guadalajara were only partially economic. Difficult family situations pushed households to leave the **pueblo** and the **rancho**. Murder of close relatives as well as difficult relations with extended family were not unusually mentioned or hinted at, as 'determinant' causes of migration. In some cases families had to flee from bloody revenge. To a certain extent, their violence in the countryside is conceived differently from urban violence. Urban violence is unexpected, and beyond codes of honour, while rural violence is perceived within of codes of honour.

The economic and social impact of drug dealing, moreover, has changed the countryside lifestyle dramatically in many places. Some areas, especially those of Los Altos de Jalisco and Zacatecas, are now centres for drug-dealing connected to the United States. This influx of money combined with remittance from migrants to the North, has changed the economic condition in many villages. Villagers live in conditions which are often superior to those of older migrants to Guadalajara. Life- styles are increasingly following United States patterns: the so called process of **nortenización** (Alarcón 1989). Therefore, some people in Polanco feel misplaced and have difficulty in coping with the changes that their **pueblos** are undergoing.

It often happens that migrants deny their place of origin its distinctive history and evolution. Some people born in the **rancho** recall their past experience in terms of a split, saying that 'te recuerdas siempre el bueno y no lo malo' (you always recall the good not the bad). The longing to be there, as a physical/magical space where life could come together and wounds could be healed, contrasts with the realisation that the

physical place does not have that intrinsic power¹¹. The original change from a rural to an urban environment is perceived as a step from an 'unconscious' to a 'conscious' life, and is represented both as self-empowerment and as loss of that power. The images are often contradictory.

Maximiliano, a worker in the beer factory Corona, came from a **rancho** near Talpa in Zacatecas in the late 1970s. He used to be a 'mazador' [amanzador] - horse tamer - and has taken different jobs since he came to work seasonally in Guadalajara from the age of fifteen. The description of his early life is that of a man of action who was not well accepted by his mates in the **rancho** for his tendency to be **muy valiente** (much valiant) both in his work and with women. He ended up staying in Guadalajara because he succeeded in 'gaining' the love of his wife who was living there at the time:

Every man is just as weak for a woman... a man looks for a woman who will be able to understand him.¹¹

Through his experiences in Guadalajara, he started to formulate his own 'taxonomy' of the world, a world of possibilities for self-realisation:

When I arrived here I started to be in contact with many people and I started to catalogue everything, and the different types of people. But in the city one feels that all are equal, with money, it is not possible to buy friendship. Everybody needs others, even millionaires - to have money is not everything.¹

From his male standpoint Maximiliano thinks that these changes in his 'cataloguing' of the surrounding world have more effect on men, because men are 'out there', looking for jobs and interacting with people. In his view, this explains why many women end up with a 'bad' man, as they have not sufficiently developed this capacity to catalogue people, and therefore male intentions.

The formulation of a new 'taxonomy' through interaction

¹¹ Raymond Williams has pointed out that the invention of a tradition, of a 'mythical' past, elides diversity among people and increases social solidarity when class conflicts are present.

in the city is expressed in Don Domingo's words too. Domingo is a man in his early sixties born in San Cristóbal de Chapala. From there he came to Guadalajara at the age of fourteen to help his uncle build a small house. He is a whitewasher, and he lives in a house which is divided into two parts, in the calle nueve. One part is occupied by his only son - Gherónimo - who is married with five children. The whole family is now actively involved in the **Comunidades de Base**. He left the village because he disliked to work the land, and had wanted to learn about house-decorating since his childhood.

The memories of his youth are very sad, because he did not have anything, and his mother was extremely busy caring for her large family. His father drank a lot, and neglected his family responsibilities to the extent that most of his children died. Domingo recalls much loneliness in his infancy because he did not have anybody to satisfy his basic needs. Nevertheless the experience in Guadalajara as an adolescent was as hard as anything in the village, and shaped even more his 'manera de ser' (way of being):

I stayed overnight in the yard sleeping like a small dog wrapped in newspaper, and that stays in one own's memory. This is what is hard, *the heart shuts*, I imagine that this is what happens. Other people are not able to understand that if someone who is hungry and in great need asks you for help you do not see him, because you went through the same type of experiences and nobody helped you, so you do not help others. So one tries to hold a straight life and does not admit mistakes. (My italics)

Coming to the city and having to find some ways of surviving helps a person to learn about the world and assimilate experience:

In the village people do not analyze much because they do not know very much, and if they do not know they start to fall behind once, twice. But in the city one learns to catalogue people by the simple fact of looking at them (Don Domingo)^k.

So bodily experiences and memory of feelings shape perceptions of the city. The experience of Don Domingo is a case of ontological insecurity where the framework of basic trust in others in everyday interaction is weakened and anxiety is

increased (Giddens 1991:46). For Don Domingo, reference points in his life - fundamental to his key experiences and expressed in the narrative of his 'I' - seem to have been shaken by coming to the city¹². However, the city for Don Domingo is also an experience which has brought him in contact to multiple worlds: he has contacts with people of different classes and status and has widened his 'way of seeing' through the CEBs. But the experience of the city has also recreated a dimension of fragmentation and isolation that he experienced early on in life. These two aspects represent two layers of his narrative: firstly his memory of expansion, of new connections and explorations of human relations; then the second layer - mentioned much later and with reluctance - related to feelings of closure, pain, and of fragmentation between self and others.

Experience of the city can also inhibit self-empowerment, because it confronts a person with the limitations of urban life. In the *rancho*, many people did not feel the sense of powerlessness they experienced coming to Guadalajara. By virtue of being oriented towards a self-sufficient economy, life in the *rancho*, could often provide for basic needs. Once migrants came to the town, they usually needed to work regularly to satisfy the basic needs of their families. Cyclical labour-rhythms were then transformed by daily wage labour and market dependence.

Eleonora is a good example of this change. She arrived in Guadalajara at the age of thirteen from a *rancho* in Las Auzera en Michoacán in the late 1950s. Her father killed somebody in an honour dispute and the family had to flee. Eleonora felt that life-changes were overpowering her, and has had to struggle to find her way through. She recalled:

One leaves the village because people throw him/her out, because people are very united, so if you have done something...you cannot stay there any more...When I arrived in the city, I was sad to have to buy small amounts [of food] every day because there was no money. In my house in the

¹²As I mentioned in the introduction of chapter I the construction of a narrative of the self is fundamental to the possibility of a sense of one's own self (see Taylor 1989:47).

rancho we had more than enough, the world closed for me and that made me sad.. life in the rancho is nice because one has all that he needs.¹

The experience of coming to the town also represents an experience of self-reflexivity, a perception of one's own self, which was not present in the countryside. So the rancho can be a place of peace where:

There is more spiritual tranquillity, what is needed to be done is done with pleasure, and it is not felt to be difficult. But the happiness in the rancho is a dumb happiness.. one lives day by day, in God's will, without ideals. I did not think.. There one is not oneself.² (Doña Marisol wife of Domingo)

So rural life is portrayed as a place where things are hard but where there is little feeling of sadness. Sadness arises with self-perception and comparison between different possible ways of being. From Doña Marisol's words, it seems that intersubjectivity is prior to subjectivity and that:

Discovering the 'other' in an emotional and cognitive way is of key importance in the initial development of self-awareness as such (Giddens 1991:51).

Representations of places of origin, then, are shaped by experiences in the city in many ways, and places of origin tend to become part of a fixed temporal past, space and time being interwoven. Cohen has observed that recalling the past in a dimension 'beyond time' is to use the past as a resource to legitimize the present and turn it from an unknown into a familiar form (Cohen 1985:99). For people in Polanco, the familiar form of the present is not a linear 'progression' from the past. It is more a composite form of gain/loss, awareness, continuity with, and opposition to the past. Modernisation theories which rest on a contrast between 'backwardness'/'progress' underestimate how social and physical experiences in the city create a body of knowledge, in minds and in feelings, which shape representations of past and present as well as leading to acquisition or loss of personal and family empowerment. In order to understand this process of self identity better, it is necessary to illustrate what it means, for some people in Polanco, 'to be' from a certain place.

2.4. 'SOY DE RANCHO'¹³

Expressions of **ranchero** culture in famous literary productions and in traditional music (Mariachi) have become stereotypical symbols of 'Mexicaness' within and outside Mexico. So distinctive elements of 'soy ranchero' belong to wider regional and national scenarios than Polanco. However, in the latter neighbourhood, people use notions of 'soy de rancho' to express varied and contrasting qualities of human interaction for instance to represent either a sense of common roots vis-à-vis the fragmentation of the city or a 'negative' distinctiveness from the 'homogeneity' of urban life.

The life of **rancheros'** population was one of breeding, small agriculture, and handcraft production in scattered settlements, with a strong form of family organisation (Gonzales 1979). Their fundamental traits can be summarized as follows (Shadow 1990). It is a culture which goes back to Spanish **colonial** times rather than being of indigenous origin; it is a stratified society, where private ownership of land is privileged over communal ownership. Stratification of society favours the formation of political oligarchy as well as high levels of rivalries and antagonism. Social organisation is based on the nuclear family, with virilocal residence, and family principles based on 'traditional' Catholic values. Parents represent the will of God within the family: males are considered superior to women; relationships imply love and respect; and the equality of male siblings implies equal shares in inheritance (De La Peña 1984). Moreover, isolation is a key characteristic of **ranchero** society (Barragan 1990).

These **ranchero** characteristics have been challenged by closer contact with urban populations and changes in the live-

¹³ The term **rancho** has varied semantic meanings. The etymology of the term is of north European, military language, indicating a meeting and a circle of people. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it began to mean provisional house-settlements, while at the end of nineteenth century it also signified a common form of land-tenancy resulting from the fragmentation of large **haciendas** (Pérez Martínez 1993).

stock market. Gonzales describes the **rancheros** who lived in the second half of the last century in the area around San Juan de Gracia (in Michoacán, south of Lake Chapala):

The **rancheros** had a poor but not sad life. Their ideal was the simple man. Sweat, strength, braveness and astuteness were regarded as worthy qualities. Physical strength, agility, ability to horse ride, and audacity were the worthiest qualities: in other words what embodied primitive life (Gonzales 1979:107).¹

Nowadays many **rancheros** have left their land because of conditions of isolation; they find unacceptable the lack of services which would allow the development of a viable trade in cattle and farming products thereby enabling them to compete with more urbanized areas to which they are presently losing out (Barragan 1990). Those who have migrated seasonally to the United States and have successfully raised money to invest in their breeding activities, have instead acquired new land and turned their **ranchos** into small **haciendas**. They are now often better-off than people in the villages; they are identified by villagers as being hard workers as well as behaving roughly, especially towards women.

'Soy de rancho' does not only identify a place of origin but a particular way of being. People in Polanco use expressions such as 'no soy **ranchero**' (I am not from the **rancho**) or 'te dejaron como novia de **rancho**' (you have been left as a girlfriend of the **rancho**), which have a negative connotation. The former is an exhortation to stop feeling shy or out of place, the latter describes the situation of somebody who has been let down waiting for somebody who has not turned up.

Young people see older people, who have lived much of their life in the **ranchos**, as physically restless. This is due to the fact that the **rancho** is a self-sufficient economy and people are used to the constant activity from dawn to dusk which the preparing and producing much of their primary necessities involves. Those who arrived to Guadalajara as adults often have a feeling of being trapped in the city, and their vital energy seems to decrease in direct proportion to

the time spent in the enclosed space of the city.

The case of 'El Murillo'- the place of origin of Clara, who was quoted at the beginning of this chapter - is an illustrative example of life in the *ranchería*¹⁴. This cluster - situated north of Ameca in the east of Jalisco - is composed of forty-two houses spread around a bushy hill, and its inhabitants are, to a greater or lesser extent, related by kinship ties¹⁵. There are striking contrasts between the colours and the material of the houses - which make them 'lost' in the vegetation - and the massive parabolic antennas placed in the courtyards side-by-side with hand-made water-wells.

The houses have big *corrales* (courtyards) where small animals are raised. A large part of daily life is carried on outdoors and houses are often unfinished inside (i.e. unpainted). Men work in sugar-cane cultivation as well as animal-breeding, while women get up before dawn to prepare tortillas, wash floors, wipe the courtyard, feed animals, go to fetch water, and wash clothes. The day starts early and is very active. When women rest they meet to embroider, while men get together drinking and smoking. Women always wear a *mandil* (apron), which they take off only when they go to Ameca: the working state is a condition of life.

Indoors the houses look neat and simple. In the bedroom there are many religious images on the walls, colourful embroidery, as well as dolls and small souvenirs. The clear order and the care with which things are kept makes the room appear like a small shrine where religious and lay images are kept on display. The bedroom, in contrast to the *colonia* where lack of space is greater and children are messy, is not a viable space during the day: life is outdoors.

Young people who live in the *rancho*, find staying there

¹⁴ In this case *rancho* is used in the sense of *ranchería*, which is a cluster of houses developed near a *hacienda*, on which the *rancheros* would have been employed. When the *hacienda* was replaced by *ejido* land-tenancy, these clusters survived as very small settlements (Pérez Martínez 1933:14).

¹⁵ In the past, but no longer now, the practice of cross cousin marriage was common.

boring and complain that to enjoy oneself one needs to go to Ameca. For Doña Clara's daughters - Chuita and Maru, who live in Polanco - the **rancho** is associated with the beauty of nature, with 'natural' food, and with a much less distressed rhythm of life than in the city; however if one is not used to enjoying one own's company it can become a solitary place. Chuita noticed that there 'la familia es muy fuerte, pero cada quien quiere jalar para su lado' (the family is strong but everyone wants to have his own way) and that conflicts within the family are very strong in the **rancho**. Maru and Chuita find it difficult to understand and justify such disputes and they infer that the experience of Guadalajara has made them and their family more flexible and open to change. Their mother 'dreams' of going back and retiring there, but the children see it as a place for 'vacaciones y para distraerse' (holidays and enjoyment). For those who have grown up in the city, the division between work and leisure is stronger than for their parents who have lived in the **rancho**.

The annual repetitions of the local patron saint, as in the **rancho** of 'El Murillo', become rituals which create a social memory and make remembering in common possible (Connerton 1989:39). The re-enactment of communal memory in such socio-religious events develops both a cognitive and habit/bodily memory, a memory renewed by the emergence of different social networks such as those between these migrants who have left (especially to United States) and those who have stayed (Massey 1987).

'Soy ranchero' in Polanco is also identified with an inability to communicate with people. **Rancheros** are perceived as people who talk, behave and communicate in a different way from people brought up in the city. The case of Don Jesús Ortega is a good example. Don Jesús was born in a **ranchito** in Michoacán at the border with Jalisco and he is now in his seventies. He arrived in Polanco thirty years ago because he did not like working the land. When he arrived in the **colonia**, he started a successful shop, in the **calle siete**, selling technical equipment. His family is now well-off by Polanco

standards. He is married with ten grown-up children who are mainly professional people, and he affirms that he loves his children very much but he does not know anything about their lives. He was brought up in the same way by his parents: they taught him to do his work without really communicating his feelings and daily plans to them. His wife is in charge of maintaining the networks of the family, but he does not talk much to her either. She was the one who held the marriage together when he used to drink a lot and spend money on other women.

For Don Jesús it is as 'unnatural' to talk about himself and his activities, as it is to ask about the activities of the other members of his family. Nevertheless, he is the one who understands the personal needs of his children better than his wife and respects their life to a greater extent. Keeping oneself to oneself is a common characteristic of people of the **rancho**, which does not mean that 'their love for the family' is any weaker. He has observed lots of changes in his **rancho** since he left:

Life in the rancho is very different. People do not work so much as in the past. There are machines: nowadays in half a day it is possible to sow what we used to sow in a month...now people dress better, in the past the differences were very noticeable. People have changed mentally too. In the past parents, and the priest kept people in fear, but now the people are more aware.⁰

'Soy de rancho' meant, and still means, to hold to a strong 'popular' religiosity. God gives punishment and reward, allows human action and holds some responsibility for it:

I have faith that God will forgive me for all the bad things I have done, because he gave me the faculty to do so - otherwise he would have not given me the faculty to do those things. If it was not wanted, I would have not done anything. If God does not allow, one cannot do it.¹

Like many people from the **rancho**, Don Jesús believes that ultimately human will cannot change divine destiny. His perception is that death is felt as closer to life in the **rancho** than in the city, because in the **rancho** human power is experienced as more subordinated to nature. After thirty years

in Polanco he still wakes up at five and goes to sleep after dusk, goes around with the typical **ranchero's** hat, and when asked if he sees himself as 'ser de Polanco', he denies it.

For people in Polanco, 'being' from the **rancho** is associated with states of culture and nature that contrast with the **colonia**. The **rancho** is recalled as a more 'natural', more 'emotional' and passionate place where people carry out blood revenge and are less 'sophisticated':

In the **rancho** people are different, they are more reserved and less intelligent. If they would hear news of a war coming, they would have a more emotional reaction. When, for instance, there was the possibility of a war with the Cuba of Fidel Castro, the people in the **rancho** locked themselves in, and when people of the government came they did not open their houses thinking they were people sent by Fidel⁹. (Soledad, ex-coordinator of CEBs)

The **rancho** is the place where women were (and still are) stolen away from their families and forced to marry. It is the place where people do not show human affection, except in the relation mother/children, where bodily distance between people is strongly emphasized. Nevertheless the **rancho** is also associated with the element of 'culture', while the **colonia** and the town are associated with the animal side of human nature because they are places of violence and deprivation. Also the **rancho** is thought of as the place where social codes and the law of honour are respected, and where the unpredictable and disruptive elements of human cohabitation (i.e. wild violence) are weaker.

2.5. 'SOY DE PUEBLO'

In many respects the perception that people in Polanco have about the **pueblo** is similar to the idea of the **rancho**. It symbolizes certain qualities of life which have been lost in the **colonia**, and it represents a 'restful' space from the hard life of the city. However, at the same time, it represents conditions of economic difficulty and social pressure to conform.

The expression '**mi pueblo**' does not always define a particular village of origin but is a general term which defines the place of origin. Those who have been brought up in a village and then moved to the city, often have mixed feelings of longing to go back that is allied to a consciousness that it is very unlikely they will in fact do so, because their offspring have grown up in the city. Many talk about their **pueblos** - which may have turned now into small towns -, but they rarely go back. Memories of the **pueblo** often arouse nostalgia and a strong sense of 'being from there' ('yo soy de allá') rather than 'here'.

Chase and Shaw (1989) have pointed out that nostalgia is a state of mind which relates to both public and subjective experiences of time. This state of mind is experienced as a feeling of dissatisfaction with the present and a lack of belief in 'progress'. People also feel nostalgia since there is a lack of faith in any 'utopia' for the future. In Polanco, a 'utopia' for the community has been proposed by the CEBs, as well as fundamentalist movements such as the Jehovah Witnesses (see chapter III). But nostalgia still emerges for some older people who have not been involved with such groups, while the perception of the village of origin for younger generation is often joyful.

New generations born in Guadalajara like to go back to the **pueblo** of their parents because social intercourse between sexes is easier there than in the **colonia**. The lay-out of space in the **pueblos** facilitates this sociability. In the centre, there is a square where young people meet and couples

walk at weekends. In many villages, such as is San Cristóbal of Lake Chapala or Totatiche in the region of Los Altos de Jalisco, during week-ends groups of girls walk arm in arm, circling around the square. They go in one direction while boys walk in the opposite one. A 'ritual' exchange of looks and smiles takes place without the different sexes talking to each other, until a boy may throw something at a girl to show his interest in her. Then she may make her move, ignoring the boy's attention or reacting to it. Much of this 'traditional' courtship still goes on in the **pueblos**, but in the city this form of play does not take place .

While the **pueblo** is perceived as a safer place, the **colonia**, in contrast, is perceived by parents as a dangerous place to let girls walk around to display themselves to boys. Many families would like their daughters to marry somebody from their village. It seems that a person's origin guarantees many of his qualities. People from one's own village are viewed with respect as having specific traits which are often alien to people in nearby villages. Particularism is, as Gonzales (1979) suggests, a strong component in the **identidad pueblerina**.

So just as the **ranchos** are perceived as places of hard work, the **pueblos** are seen as joyful places, places for 'resting' from the city and where 'la gente es muy fiestera' (people like to have parties). **Bandas** and **conjuntos** (different forms of music bands) play for weddings, confirmations, quince años (girls' fifteenth birthday celebration), and for religious festivities when migrants to the North come back to visit.

In the **pueblo**, the potentially disruptive anonymous element of the city gives way to a feeling of familiarity with the land, the people and their way of life. People in a **pueblo** greet one another in the street, and there is a sense of respect for strangers. In the **colonia**, elders who have come from the **ranchos** or the **pueblo** still do not address unfamiliar persons with the second singular person **-tú-** but use the polite form: **usted**. A sense of respect and hierarchy is associated with the way of life of the **pueblo**. Rules of 'acceptable'

behaviour are strict, and gossip among men and women serves to reinforce standards.

The village of San Cristóbal, where don Domingo was born, is right on the edge of Lake Chapala, and has become a major resort for many rich **tapatios** and for retired North Americans. Now, because the water supply for Guadalajara industry has been taken from this source, the lake has shrunk and the tourist businesses have declined. San Cristóbal is situated in the less touristic side of the lake and many people have to go and work in Guadalajara. Few have migrated to the States from San Cristóbal, while nearby villages are sites of intense migration to California.

San Cristóbal is considered 'backward' by people who live in the surrounding villages, as well as by the local priest. However many of those who live in Guadalajara miss the peace, the security and the friendliness of the village. The idea of 'backwardness' hinges upon the old indigenous roots of the place and the fact that villagers of San Cristóbal are not very concerned with economic improvement of their standard of life. Those who have set up the best businesses are people who have come from other villages. Don Domingo and his family have started instead to appreciate their indigenous roots, due also to their experience of the **Comunidades** in Polanco and their proximity to a freemason cousin who lives in the village and works in Guadalajara as a judge. This cousin 'teaches' them about the danger of United States' colonisation, and the pride of having indigenous Mexican roots.

In San Cristóbal, young people go to work in Guadalajara, leaving either daily or at the beginning of the week to come back for the weekend. Ana, the nephew of Don Domingo, has been training in a nursery school in Guadalajara, largely supporting herself. She had to fight with her father to be able to go to school. He wanted her to find a husband and stay at home. In her first years at school, she felt different from her classmates: she was shy and reserved, wearing a different look and 'innocently' trusting people.

Ana now feels displaced in San Cristóbal: she is twenty-

four, without a boyfriend and she feels that 'se está quedando' (literally 'she has been left over': nobody will marry her). Her experience in the city has changed her way of looking at men: she realizes that many men have 'double' intentions and she can 'catalogue' them in a different way than when she used to live in the village. When she is back in the **pueblo**, she is confronted with the poor economic situation of her family which has not been able to make much progress in the construction of their house. Her blame is implicitly directed against her mother, who is not a good 'saver' in comparison to her sister in-law, who lives next door and is very good at saving and producing income. Her perception is that her family 'has not made it', and she feels embarrassed to show her poor household to friends who come from Guadalajara.

Ana perceives the **pueblo** as the place where life is calmer, things are 'known' and where she is 'known', but where people check on their neighbours' lives constantly. Since she has been living in the city, the village has become for her a mental space associated with pressure towards conformity. In the village the fact of being different, and deviant - such as in the case of the Domingo's freemason cousin - is responded to by social isolation and the allocation of religious blame.

Ana's perception is shared by many in Polanco who have been brought up in the **pueblo**. They feel that there is a sense of security and easiness in the **pueblo**, but at the same time social control is higher. 'Contradictory' images of the village as a place of love and hate crop up frequently. The **pueblo**, then is a place for encountering one's self, a place to rest - as is the **rancho** - but it is also the place that has driven families away and a source of separations and crises.

2.6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has illustrated that the **colonia** and the **ciudad** are perceived as 'known' or 'unknown' spaces, while representing in the life of the people of Polanco, a possibility of self-empowerment, self-reflection or an experience of loss of power over the course of one's life. The **rancho** and the **pueblo** represent spaces for possibilities of finding oneself and overcoming a sense of separation. At the same time, they can represent an inability to 'know' about the world and people's actions in it. There is pride (in the sense of integrity and value) as well as shame (in the sense of a failure to live up to an urban image of the self, as in the case of Ana) in being 'from' the **rancho** and the **pueblo**. The pride related to **rancho** and **pueblo** is connected to their symbolic lack of change over time, while pride in Polanco is associated with its capacity for change. In fact, Polanco is now becoming a 'safer' place, with less violence and trouble-makers than in the past.

Belonging to a particular household, neighbourhood village or **rancho** is fundamental to the ways in which people perceive those places. In this sense notions of time and space are interwoven, because the 'tradition' of the past can be recreated and transformed in the urban 'present'. In fact, narratives concerning symbolic representations of space and belonging contain multiple and co-existing images of the 'urban' and the 'rural'.

The different images, which people in Polanco formulate, of **ciudad**, **colonia**, **pueblo** and **rancho**, and their changes over time raise the issue as to whether individual voices may represent a communal identity. Cohen (1985) has argued that the formation of the identity of a community is a relational process that takes place through the experience of its borders. The experience and awareness of borders through confrontation with the 'other' shapes the identity of a community. But the identity of a community is not equivalent to communal identity: conformity cannot be mistaken for uniformity (Cohen 1993: 208). So the voices of the various actors which are reported in the

chapter show that there are different ways of imagining and representing the past, the 'rural' and the 'urban', and they cannot be taken as homogenous representations, but as 'interpretative resources' (Cohen 1993:207).

Personal idiosyncratic experiences are not determined by, but shape the heterogeneity of 'collective representations'. They also reveal processes of self-consciousness which seem to arise, particularly, through moments of ontological insecurity and confrontation with different 'others'.

^a Quieren comprar un departamento para Jardines de la Cruz, pero de qué van a ser dueños..del aire! Mejor que se compren un lotecito en el Cerro y finchen algo allá...

^b Frente al Palacio del Gobierno, vecinos de la colonia Lomas de Polanco...realizaron ayer una manifestación de protesta por lo que calificaron elevado el cobro por las obras de urbanización que se ejecutan a través del Consejo de Colaboración Municipal'.

^c En un recorrido que el reportero realizó por las calles de las colonias Santa Cecilia y Polanco, encontró una serie de letreros pintados en las paredes donde se incita a la rebelión; en otros se lanzan insultos al ejército, a la policía y al gobierno.

^d POLANCO DESASTROSO:

En abandono desde hace 35 años, Terrenos sin legalizar y calles sin pavimentos, Indiferencias ante inundaciones "muy graves" Asesinatos y atracos se cometen casi diariamente, Es una impune cueva de drogadictos y malvivientes'.

^e Los chlavos aquí son muy fresilla, son presumidos, por esto yo me llevo mejor con la gente de Echevarría [a more recent colonia] porque la gente allá es mas simple.

^f En la ciudad todo ya esta hecho, si uno no está preparado la ciudad se comen uno del campo.

^g En la ciudad no hay libertad pero libertinaje, no hay gente mala en el rancho porque todos necesitan de todos, puedes dejar los niños libres, no hay droga, ni perdición como en la ciudad.

^h Cualquier hombre es igual de débil para la mujer..el hombre busca una mujer que lo pueda comprender.

ⁱ Cuando llegué aquí empecé a tener contacto con mucha gente y empecé a catalogar todo, y a catalogar los diferentes tipos de gente, pero en la ciudad uno siente que todos están igualados, con el dinero no se puede comprar el amistad, todo el mundo ocupa la gente también los millonarios, por esto traer mucho dinero no es todo.

^j Me quedaba en las obras durmiendo como un perrito envuelto en los periódicos y esto a uno se le va grabando. Esto es que a uno se le hace duro, *el corazón se cierra*, yo me imagino que esto ha de ser. Otras personas no alcanzan a entender que si uno tiene hambre y necesidades no lo ve uno porque él pasó experiencias fuertes y nadie le dió la mano así no le da la mano. Así que uno intenta llevar la vida mejor recta que puede y no admite errores.

^k En el pueblo la gente no analiza tanto porque no conoce mucho, y si no entiende empieza para atrasar una experiencia, una vez y otra, pero en la ciudad uno aprende a categorizar la gente al simple trato de verla.

¹ Uno se sale del pueblo porque lo echan, porque la gente es muy unida entonces si ya has hecho algo, ya no puedes quedarte allá..cuando llegué a la ciudad se me hacía triste que comprar punitos cada día porqué no había dinero. En mi casa en el rancho había montonales, se me cerraba el mundo y se me hacía tristeza.. la vida en el rancho es bonita porque tiene todo lo que necesita.

² Hay más tranquilidad espiritual, lo que uno tiene que hacer lo hace con gusto y no se le hace tan difícil, pero la felicidad que uno tiene en el rancho es una felicidad tonta...uno vive el día como Dios le deja entender, sin ideales. Yo no pensaba... uno allá no es uno.

³ Los rancheros llevaban una vida pobre, pero no penosa. Su ideal de hombre era sencillo. Entre las cosas dignas se citaban el sudor, el vigor, la bravura y la astucia. Se estimaban sobre todas las cosas, las fuerzas físicas, la destreza en el manejo del caballo y la audacia: en suma la vida primitiva.

⁴ La vida en el rancho es muy diferente, las personas no trabajan tanto como antes, hay máquinas, ahora en medio día se siembra lo que sembrábamos en un mes...Ahora la gente anda bien vestida, antes se veía mucho la diferencia. La gente ha cambiado mentalmente también, antes a los padres y a los sacerdotes los tenía en el temor, ahora la gente ha despertado mucho.

⁵ Yo tengo fe en Dios, para todo el mal que he hecho me va a perdonar porque El me dió facultad de hacer estas cosas, si El no hubiera querido yo no hubiera hecho nada. Si Dios no te da licencia uno no lo hace.

⁶ En el rancho es diferente, la gente es más cerrada, más tapada, si escucharía una noticia de guerra tuviera una reacción emotiva más fuerte. Cuando por ejemplo hubo lo del Fidel Castro y la posibilidad de un guerra con Cuba, la gente en el rancho se cerró en su casa y cuando venía gente del gobierno no le abrían creyendo que era gente de Fidel.

CHAPTER III: BETWEEN 'TRADITIONAL' AND 'NEW': CHURCH
RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter II was dedicated to the dynamics of belonging through the analysis of metaphors of space and time. This chapter focuses on belonging to the Catholic Church in Polanco, and is centred on the experience of the **Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs)**¹ - particularly in the parish of the Anunciación - and on the ways in which the Church is represented in the eyes of some of its members. Tension between the radical and conservative Mexican Church is present at the micro-level of Polanco, and it is expressed within the CEBs (in different degrees by clerics, **promotores**² and members) through metaphors of the 'new' and the 'old/traditional' Church. The second part of the chapter looks at religious experiences within two 'traditional' Church groups and the ways members of these groups perceive the work of the CEBs and in turn are seen by CEBs members.

The tension between 'new' and 'traditional' Churches formulated in the language of the CEBs expresses the difficulties of combining, in practice, aspects of modernity (especially tendencies to universal, rationalism as against mysticism, and the development of the individual as an active freely choosing agent) with 'traditional' critiques of

¹ The CEBs are groups of biblical interpretation organized at the level of the *calle* (street), and based on 'residential vicinity and local knowledge' (Banck 1989:13). Padre Saravia, a Jesuit who worked in Polanco, explains that the **Comunidad** stands for an organized work of unified group; **Eclesial** refers to a community which is being evangelized and which also inspires evangelisation; **de Base** means that they are created for, and made by, the **pueblo** and the marginalized class (Saravia 1986: 116-117). It is important to point out the CEBs are not as widely spread in Guadalajara as the Charismatic movement is. The history of Polanco is therefore different from the average of the **colonias populares** which constitute the ZMG (Zona Metropolitana de Guadalajara).

² Throughout the thesis I use the Spanish word **promotor** which translates as organizer/ animator of groups and activities.

modernity (such as critiques of capitalism and privatisation of faith) both of which are at the base of the Theology of Liberation (Lehmann 1990, Lowy 1990). The 'new' and the 'traditional' trends of evangelisation within the Mexican Catholic Church represent different fields of religious identities in so far as they postulate different relations between clergy, lay and divine agents as well as notions of change and religious commitment. In this respect the case of Polanco shows different aspects of the creation of a 'popular subject' via the experience of community organisation within popular religion (Levine 1992; 1993a)³.

It is true that the 'new' Church induces changes in matters of personal responsibility vis-à-vis one's own life and the life of the community⁴. But, through the analysis of the activity of the Jesuits and the priests of the Anunciación, I argue that the 'new' Church is similar to the 'traditional' Church to the extent that in the CEBs activities there is a subtle hierarchical control and distribution of knowledge between clerical agents, *promotores* and members.

3.2. THE MEXICAN CHURCH: TRADITIONALISM, RADICALISM AND MODERNITY

In order to understand the tensions which arise in Polanco, it is necessary to outline the meanings attached to 'traditional' and 'new' positions within the Mexican Church. In Mexico, the effects of the 'modernisation' of Vatican II and the Puebla and Medellín conventions are influenced by the structural relation between the Church and the State.

In this first section I briefly sketch the relation of the Church with the Mexican State, and focus on the policy changes that the President, Salinas de Gortari, has introduced

³ Levine uses 'popular subject' to stress the transformation of people from backward/voiceless objects to self-creating subjects - vital actors in the process of religious and cultural change (1992: 29).

⁴ In chapter VII I will focus more on personal changes which affect members of the CEBs in their everyday life and self-perception.

into this relationship. In the second section I briefly describe the genesis of these tensions within different strands of the Church as a background to understanding the development of the Church in Polanco and especially in the parish of the Anunciación.

The Mexican Church, in fact, is not an homogenous body (Arias 1981, Barrymen 1987). On the one hand part of the Church has embraced the defence of the rights of the poor and of the indigenous people, especially in regions such as Chiapas⁵ and Oaxaca. The radical clergy, which works for a 'church of the poor' and the raising of political/religious consciousness, has been undermined because of a renewed alliance between parts of the Church hierarchy - inclined towards the conservative orientation of John Paul II - and the policy of PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional). On the other hand, this latter Church hierarchy, is nowadays more 'conservative' than its counterparts in countries such as Nicaragua or Guatemala (Rowe 1991, Barry 1992).

3.2.1. THE MEXICAN CHURCH AND THE STATE

Since Mexican Independence, but especially during the Porfiriato period (1876-1910), the questioning of Church-State relations by liberal movements (such as freemasonry) has led to open conflicts. It was in 1917 that the Mexican Church was constitutionally denied its juridical personality, and that basic political rights of the clergy as individuals were withdrawn. The Catholic Church was represented by the State as a 'traditional' stronghold against the 'liberal' principles of the revolution expressed in the PRI-State politics.

The strongest popular resistance to this State policy toward the Church was expressed by the Cristero revolt⁶ which

⁵ The mediator between the government and the guerrilleros at the forefront of indigenous appraisal of January 1994 in Chiapas, was the archbishop of San Cristobal Samuel Ruíz, who has been involved for a long time in the work of the CEBs.

⁶ The Cristero war was a resistance to the State creating a 'myth' of the nation:

The issue was state secularisation in opposition to

took place in the region of the Altos de Jalisco at the end of the 1920s, and during which many laymen and clergy died. This confrontation had important repercussions in strengthening traditional religious conservatism in the region of Jalisco and Guadalajara itself. The Cristero rebellion and the subsequent subordination of the Church to State laws influenced the formation of lay Catholic groups within the Church. Groups such as Acción Católica Mexicana and later the PAN (Partido de Acción National) were born out of the need to 'defend' the Church's religious participation in social civil life (Partida 1992). However, the constitutional relation between Church and State has changed in the latest presidential sexennial (1988-1994). To understand these changes, I give a brief summary of Salinas de Gortari's policy and its impact on civil society.

Salinas de Gortari has focused on a neo-liberal policy. Through this policy he has used a rhetoric of modernisation combined with nationalism - a typical ingredient of Mexican political discourse ever since the Mexican revolution. However, in his policy, modernity has become modernism: the language of a unitary 'national identity' as the long-term foundation of political stability has been used to support a neo-liberal economy, based on free trade, and the privatisation of State enterprise and land - rather than on protectionism and State intervention (Gledhill 1994: 111). Nevertheless, the redistribution of wealth in such an economy has not filtered down to the lower strata of society, as the 'populist' rhetoric of the president claims (e.g. via the programme of 'Solidaridad' (Pettersen 1991)). In this sense, in Mexico, as in other countries in Latin America, 'modernism has occurred without modernity' (Rowe 1991: 196). In other words, notions of national State, of universal 'modern' man, and of

traditional Catholicism, which constituted the framework through which peasants' rights and their world view were articulated. The war brought about the end of an autonomous rural culture - a necessary step for the unification of the nation. (Rowe 1991: 158)

technological development, have not been paralleled by the modernisation of production, conditions of work or 'amelioration' of education at grass root levels. This failure is what the CEBs try to stress in their evangelisation, and one of their aims is to forge a Catholic resistance to both poverty and exploitation by the State in the underprivileged strata of society.

Salinas' policy concerning the relation between State and civil society has centred on *concertación* (agreement). This is basically a State policy of linking peasant and urban popular movements to the State 'by opening up new areas of grassroots participation' (Harvey 1993:17). Salinas has also worked towards a parallel 'reconciliation' (and made use of it politically⁷) between the Church and the State. The reformulation of article 130 of the constitution in 1991, with the subsequent recognition of the political right of the clergy to vote (but not to stand for election) plus a renewed support of the state for private schools (Catholic for the most part) have been the first moves in this 'reconciliation'. However, this reconciliation has targeted a part of the Church which does not represent the principles and the type of evangelisation expressed by the CEBs. This is because Salinas de Gortari's policy has not benefited the lowest strata of society, who are central to the CEBs discourse.

Although part of the Church has been inclined towards an alliance with the conservative PAN, especially during the first Triennium of Salinas, PRI politics continues to merge - de facto

⁷ One of the targets of this 'reconciliation' has been to displace the opposition of the PAN (Partido de Acción Nacional) whose support increased consistently in the second half of the 1980s. This party - being the 'traditional' voice of the conservative wing of the Church, linked to the Vatican - has therefore seen part of its platform taken away by Salinas de Gortari's politics: support for the interests of the Church has been a central point of the PAN political alternative to the PRI. The PAN does not have great social support in Polanco, but in both the 1988 and 1991 parliamentary elections PAN won in the circumscription to which Polanco, together with richer middle-class neighbourhoods (such as Jardines de La Cruz) belong.

- with the 'traditionalism' of certain parts of the Church (Laueza 1985)⁸. This alliance with the State is opposed by a minority of the Church - rooted in the experience of the Theology of Liberation - which has been inclined towards the position of the PRD (Partido Revolucionario Democrático). However, this part of the Church, which in Guadalajara is represented by the work of the Jesuits⁹, is aware of the present limitations and of inner divisions within the PRD itself.

⁸ In reality, until the late 1980s the official opposition of interests between the Mexican State and the Church hierarchy was counterbalanced by the existence of converging conservative interests between these two bodies:

The hierarchical Church seeks to reclaim its power through implicit alliance with the State and through strengthening its links with the bourgeoisie.... the hierarchy, far from establishing links with the common people and their interests, seeks to obtain a clearer place within the structure of political power, in order to reproduce itself institutionally (Choncha Malo 1986:191)(*my translation*).

⁹ SEDOC (Servicios Educativos De Occidente), an educational Institute run by Jesuits in Guadalajara, organized the electoral campaign of the PRD candidate in Tlaquepaque, Gloria Topete, for the 1991 municipal election.

3.2.2. ORIENTATIONS WITHIN THE MEXICAN CHURCH

The lack of homogeneity of the Mexican Church not only reflects its ambivalent relationship to the State but also to the Vatican Church. This latter connection is a very important factor in Church policy in Guadalajara - a city which is called in jargon 'El Vaticanito'. The CEBs movement represents an important innovation within the Mexican Church, and in Guadalajara they have encountered much religious conservatism. Their impulse is due to the activities of the Jesuits, who have a strong base in Guadalajara.

Before the convention of Medellín in 1968 there was already a call for renewal within the Mexican Church¹⁰. However, it was during the 1970s, after the impact of the Medellín convention and the effects of the student slaughter in the Federal District - the 'matanza de Tlatelolco'¹¹ in 1968 - that different groups arose within the Mexican Church to support a stronger political engagement of the Church in favour of social justice. Among such groups were the SPP (Sacerdotes Para el Pueblo), the CPS (Cristianos por el Socialismo) and the movement of the Base Ecclesial Communities, CEBs (Malo 1986). For a while, during the early 1970s, these innovative tendencies were neither openly supported nor suppressed by the Mexican Church's hierarchy. The CEM (Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano) was not inclined towards either the radical or the conservative stream of the Church, and it was

¹⁰ The first indication of renewal within the Mexican Church appeared in the early 1950s. This new trend can be identified with the experiment of the Benedict Gregorio Lemerrier and the work of the archbishop Sergio Mendez Arceo who supported the work of the theologian Ivan Illich in the foundation of Centro Interamericano de Documentacion (CIDOC) and the Centro Pastoral para America Latina in Cuernavaca, Morelos.

¹¹ The matanza de Tlatelolco (from the name of the square in Mexico D.F. where it happened) is one of the darkest moment in Mexico's recent history. On the second of October hundreds of students were killed by police and soldiers and many more wounded and imprisoned because they were (pacifically) protesting to demand respect for human rights, the end of police repression and wider popular participation in reform and political life.

only towards the end of the 1970s, after the Puebla convention, that part of the Church hierarchy started to isolate and obstruct the branch which supported a political commitment to the 'Church of the poor'. Archbishops who led the Theology of Liberation movement in Mexico - such as Mendez Arceo, Arturo Lona and Samuel Ruiz - were obstructed in their work¹².

However, the Mexican Church has accepted the challenge of the Vatican II reforms. It is a Church whose evangelism addresses issues of social inequality and poverty in which many of its members live; but the *Iglesia de los pobres*¹³ (Church of the poor) can be interpreted in different ways, as a Church of, for, or with the poor.

A part of the Mexican Church limits its action to the pastoral and evangelical spheres, where the orientation of the Church towards the poor is organized around concepts of charity and service. This is the case with those groups which are considered by members of the CEBs - to greater or lesser extent- to be part of the 'traditional' Church. They tend to call for changes in personal attitudes. In the case of Polanco, I will analyze two groups : The *Movimiento Familiar Cristiano* (MFC) and the *Adoración Nocturna* (the male

¹² This conservative swing was influenced by the way in which the Vatican policies - promoted by John Paul II - have become increasingly concerned with family and personal morality, censorship and sexual ethics. For example, after the resignation of Mendez Arceo from the diocese of Guernavaca (1983) the Archbishop Juan Jesús Posadas Ocampo was sent to take his place. Posadas was until 25 May 1993 - when he was murdered 'by accident' - archbishop of Guadalajara, and was recognized to be very hostile to the Theology of Liberation movement. He had seriously undermined, (during his five years in Guernavaca) the work that Mendez Arceo had done over three decades. In Guadalajara, he 'substituted' (or isolated) the 'radical' - Theology of Liberation inclined - priests with clergy sympathetic to the charismatic movement (for an example of similar priests' displacements decided by the hierarchy in Columbia, see Levine 1985). Posadas had been appointed Cardinal in Rome by Pope John Paul II in 1991.

¹³ The idea of a Church as a community aligned with the poor and open to a modern secular idea of freedom of consciousness is the result of the modernisation process undertaken since Vatican II (Smith 1991).

counterpart of the *La Vela Del Santísimo*). The roots of MFC are in the *Acción Católica* and in the *cursillos* (courses). The MFC was created in the late 1960s as an organisation of active laity, part of the Church, but not dependent directly upon its hierarchy. In many subsequent instances the progressive ideas of the movement (e.g. family planning) were 'smoothed out' by the religious hierarchy (Arias 1981:25). The *Adoración Nocturna* - formed at the beginning of the century in Rome - has not been a vehicle for any progressive ideas, but a stronghold of conservative religious views.

The 'radical' part of the Mexican Church wants to be part of the *proceso popular* (popular process), transforming the pastoral into the organisational and the political. This is the objective of the Jesuits and the CEBs (Chonca Malo 1986). For this part of the Church, the relationship to the poor implies social mobilisation and structural change of society as a central point of the religious Catholic message. The Theology of Liberation, at the base of the CEBs evangelisation, rejects the modern liberal view of separation between the collective and the individual, and between the religious and the political domains (Lowy 1990). It also rejects the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, attempting instead a synthesis of both: combining a critique of capitalism and an attempt to restate the community as a core value, with defence of individual freedom, the right of criticism of an authoritarian Church, and denial of 'unreflective impulses' (Lehmann 1990:121) of popular religiosity. However, the case of Polanco shows a way in which once these theological principles become applied to local practice, they change.

In the following sections, I explore how some of the tensions between and within different Church tendencies are represented by lay and clerical agents in Polanco. These tensions reveal processes of group boundary-formation.

3.3. THE CHURCH IN POLANCO AND THE 'QUESTION OF THE OTHER'

The labels of the 'new' and the 'traditional' Church are used, in CEBs discourse, to construct a notion of the 'other', different from the 'self' of the CEBs (Bank 1989). In the case of Polanco there are two levels at which the position of the 'new' and the 'traditional' Church can be analyzed: at the level of 'models' of the Church, and the way in which these models are carried out in the policy of the parishes (I discuss in particular the case of the Anunciación). However, the hierarchical way in which the knowledge is constructed, in concrete cases within the CEBs groups, and the actual relation between clergy and laymen, reveal similarities with the attributes given to the 'traditional' church. The different tendencies within the Church draw different boundaries of the self in so far as they attribute relations between laymen, clergy and divine agents, but some of those difference in practice may overlap. The 'traditional' and the 'new' Church do not represent a linear developing process but rather an ensemble of multiple possibilities of self and group identities.

Before introducing some of the dynamics of these processes I want to describe the appearance of the two parishes in order to give a picture of the histories of lay participation and clerical action in Polanco. Santa Magdalena is a large Church situated at the east end of the park. It looks finished and decorated; it has a large annex at the back, where different religious activities take place: different forms of catechism, chorus singing, a drama group (there is a theatre which was used in the past by the Jesuits for meetings of the popular movement), and youth groups. Two priests are in charge of it: el Cura Rodolfo and an assistant priest Padre Jorge. Padre Rodolfo is a very clever man from a middle class background. His style of religious leadership differs from that of his predecessors in that he supports the CEBs but wants to avoid a confrontation with the religious hierarchy of Guadalajara, and so he has changed the political orientation of

the parish which was once similar to that of the Jesuits (see below).

The parish of the Anunciación by contrast, is hidden from view. Access to it is via a side street and through a gate which looks similar to the doors of one of the many workshops in Polanco. The Anunciación was originally a dependent chapel of the Santa Magdalena, and was recognized as a separate church in 1988. Building work started in the early 1980s, but at the beginning of the 1990s there was still much to be done. The roof is not finished and part of the space between the place for functions and the side chapels has been rebuilt by the priest now in charge: Padre Nemo. The visible space within the Anunciación is very dispersed and parishioners often complain about the slow progress of the building work. Some of the activity in the parish is still at an embryonic level: there is a choir, a group theatre and different catechism groups and a group of *medicina popular* (see chapter IV).

The *Comunidades* (called now - in accordance with the archiepiscopal plan for the dioceses of Guadalajara - *Grupos de Barrio*) have been introduced officially into the parish of the Anunciación since 1988 by Padre Nemo. Before then, the Jesuits had organized the *Comunidades*, especially on the Santa Magdalena side. During the period of intense social mobilisation in Polanco (end of 1970s, beginning of the 1980s) there were more than sixty adult and twenty youth groups of *Comunidades* meeting once a week, coordinated by Jesuits who worked actively in the Parish of the Santa Magdalena. The Jesuits rather than the clergy of Santa Magdalena were the *promotores* of the *Comunidades*.

Today the situation is different. The CEBs are present in both parishes. These groups are organized by the parish priests and follow a common plan ordained at the level of the diocese. In 1992 the majority of people involved in the *Comunidades* of the Anunciación is different from those who participated previously with the Jesuits. The number of *Comunidades* in this parish were fifteen in 1990 and twenty four (plus six youth groups) in 1992, but in relation to the data I

described in chapter I their presence has decreased considerably since the late 1970s¹⁴. The **Comunidades** also organized a food cooperative which sold fish directly from the fishermen of Lake Chapala, but the experiment flopped for lack of communication and organisation.

Some of the 'older' coordinators, who have been long-term members of the **Comunidades** since the time of the Jesuits, assert that only the groups which meet in the Anunciación are 'real' **Comunidades**. The ones in Santa Magdalena - they claim - follow a programme of analyses concerted by Padre Rodolfo and his team. This is much 'milder' and does not make the transition from pastoral to social and political mobilisation. Levine (1985), discussing the Colombian Church, argues that the notion of the base and 'popular' are axes of conflicts between different part of the Church. The use of these terms often indicates a renaming done by the hierarchy rather than a real transformation of the Church. Bishops call the base "**Comunidades**" but privilege the ecclesial and hierarchical order rather than the organisational and the political aspects which should be central to CEBs activities. They rename the base as 'the poor' but interpret it as the ensemble of those who are humble and hold popular religious beliefs rather than seeing the poor as class in itself (Levine 1985:310)¹⁵.

3.3.1. THE 'NEW' CHURCH: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE 'COMUNIDADES'

In this section I illustrate the principles of the **Comunidades**, and highlight some concepts about human and non-human agencies and about Catholic practice which differ from

¹⁴ This is similar to the case of Santa Cecilia in the north east of the city described by De la Peña (1990).

¹⁵ I disagree with Levine's early analysis of the poor as a class, because it underestimates the heterogeneity internal to the category (Levine 1985). In later studies he has developed the analysis of CEBs through a more interesting focus on agency and morality (Levine 1993).

what is regarded within the CEBs as 'traditional' religion¹⁶. The point is to show the way in which the experience of the CEB proposes a specific way of being in society. This implies changes in ways of thinking, acting, and of self-image, in both the religious and the secular domains, and therefore bears directly on the construction of the self.

The experience of the **Comunidades** in Mexico can be divided into three main periods¹⁷: 1) A stage of 'Renovación Pastoral, o el Nacimiento' (1968-75) - after the Medellín meeting (1968) - when it became necessary to exchange experiences and mobilize people at a grass roots level. 2) A second period (1975-1979) - connected to the Convention of Puebla - marked by a confrontation between different models of the Church: the 'dominant' model, allied with the State against the **pueblo**, and the 'alternative' model, based on increased participation of laymen and of the underprivileged classes in pastoral life. The 'new' evangelisation focused on promotion at the grass-roots level of groups such as **medicina popular** groups and small cooperatives of production and consumption. 3) The third stage - up to the beginning of the 1990s - is considered, in the history of the CEBs, to be a period of

¹⁶ The dichotomy between the 'new' and the 'traditionalist' Church is at the root of CEB. A clear example was a three-day workshop on the 'New Evangelisation' given to the people of the CEBs in the parish of the Anunciación at the end of February 1992. In this workshop, coordinated by two sisters of COSLA of Mexico City (Coordinación Solidaria con la Lucha Alternativa), the 'traditional' Church was associated with 'the Marian cults and the 'spiritualists', who want a good relation between the Church and the State', while the CEBs were associated with the concept of 'the person who embraces both body and spirit'. The 'Iglesia tradicional' (traditional Church) is a 'dividing' Church while the 'Iglesia liberadora' (the liberating Church) is an unifying Church.

¹⁷ This division is taken from the material discussed in a national meeting which was held in Ciudad Guzman, Colima (February 1992). The title of the meeting was: 'CEBs: memoria y promesa de evangelización liberadora en México' (CEBs: memory and the promise of evangelisation for freedom in Mexico). Arguments centred on recalling the memory of the past to illuminate the present in order to foresee and build the future - showing past, present and future to be intrinsically connected.

consolidation and of strengthening of political participation of the Church movement in the **promoción popular**.

The majority of members in the **Comunidades** in Polanco are middle-aged and older women, even if most of the coordinators are men. Each group consists on average of between five and fifteen people. Meetings are opportunities for small social gatherings, and often end by sharing sweets and drinks. The network of the parish of the Anunciación functions as follows: what is decided and announced in the general meeting is then reported by the leaders to the groups in the **calles**. The theme of the week called the **morral** (after the name of the cotton bag, which, with the sandals and red patterned scarves, are the symbol of CEB membership) is discussed in the general meeting of the **coordinadores** and a handout is prepared by the sisters¹⁸. This will then be used as a guide during one of the following weeks in the groups' discussions. Most of the activities organized within the **Comunidades** are decided in these general meetings of the coordinators. Such activities include, for example, fund-raising for the construction of the Church, meetings with other **Comunidades**, and the running of **la mutual** (a cooperative with approximately three hundred members set up to help people with funeral expenses)¹⁹. The pressure on time for some of the coordinators can be intense, especially for those women who have become involved without the support of their husbands.

One of the main principles of the **Comunidades** is the construction of the 'Church of the poor'. This implies the creation of the realm of God, here and now, through a democratisation of society (a more equal distribution of social wealth and defence of political and human rights). This is

¹⁸ A group of eight novice sisters of the order of the Carmelites lives in a big house in the parish of the Anunciación. They help in teaching the catechism and in the organisation of the CEBs.

¹⁹ When people are not members of the **mutual**, money is pooled among street neighbourhood groups in case of unexpected and urgent expenses such as mourning costs. People within or outside the CEBs react generously to these callings.

considered to be the core of the biblical message. The **Comunidades** would like to be a 'Church in movement' where this process is created and empowered from the base towards the hierarchy and not vice-versa. The process of learning together, of participating in the formulation of the Church's action in everyday practice, is central to this experience. The 'new' Church (the 'nueva Iglesia' or the 'Iglesia Joven' (young Church)) aims to challenge 'old' religious hierarchical institutions²⁰. However some examples of the situation in Polanco, which I present later, suggest that the power-balance in the creation of knowledge does not always follow this precept.

The principles of the CEBs are expressed in the slogan **ver, pensar, actuar** (to see - in the sense of becoming aware - to think and to act). The missionary task of the CEBs develops at the prophetic, pastoral and sacerdotal levels. The prophetic task is to 'announce and denounce' because faith entails speaking the truth. The pastoral commitment is to organize and bring together the underprivileged to defend their human rights. The dimension of the sacraments is the area where strength and vision can be collected in order to build the realm of God. The centre of a meeting of the **Comunidades** is personal reflection upon, and discussion of, biblical passages taken mainly from the Gospels, Exodus, Genesis and the Prophets of the Old Testament. In the written guideline on the theme of the day there are questions, to be answered collectively, which relate to the actual biblical passages.

This simple but profound operation has some interesting results at different levels. It obviously affects people's perception of reality, not just as an account of the contents discussed, but also because of the form of the language used. The interpretation of the language of the Bible becomes symbolic. If people were used to interpreting the Bible

²⁰ 'All this runs counter to traditional images of knowledge in a Catholic context, which follows a trickle-down model, whereby lay persons are subordinated to sisters, sisters to priests, priests to bishop, and so on' (Levine 1992:138).

literally (or, as some older people recall from the time in which the mass was in Latin, not interpreting it at all) they would be introduced to a different interpretative approach.

Doña Marisol, an old woman who has been actively involved in the work of the **Comunidades**, describes her experience in this way:

When I was growing up they told us the history of the creation of the world, but now they explain it to us in a different way. [The fact that] Adam and Eve are made of mud is not literal but symbolic; priest Saravia tells us that it is a state of consciousness.^a

I cannot say to what extent the symbolic language affects the way in which people perceive themselves as part of the religious world. Some people comment on the difficulty of using a symbolic language as opposed to a literal one; to understand 'mas cerca la realidad' (the reality in a more profound way): one needs to move away from the literal in order to understand the 'real'. This difficulty is formulated through affirmations such as :

I do not understand anything.. it is too much for me..we are simple people...we do not have enough understanding^b

Members of the **Comunidades** represent themselves as those who *lack* knowledge, and they have an admiration for the coordinators, and for the members of the clergy, who are perceived as '*having more knowledge than oneself*' ('ellos tienen mas conocimientos que uno...'). The limitation of a literal interpretation of the Bible is judged negatively within the **Comunidades** and is associated with both the 'traditional/old' Church²¹ and the 'sectas' (i.e. Jehovah witnesses)²².

²¹ People in the CEBs use expression such as: 'ellos son tradicionalistas...son de la Iglesia opresora..de la Iglesia de antes...' (they are traditionalist...they are from the oppressive Church...the old Church).

²² The Jehovah Witnesses are an interesting example of a group which is judged negatively by the members of the CEBs. I have participated in some of their meetings and interviewed a few people in order to understand in what way their religious practice is similar to, or different from the CEBs. Dramatic changes in personal life habits are requested (i.e. giving up

Both are considered, to a greater or lesser extent, to emphasize a sense of sin and a fear of God. They are judged to lack a 'real' sense of a social self and to concentrate instead on personal salvation.

Much of the discourse of the CEBs is played around the polarity between 'old' and 'new'. The present priest of the Anunciación and some of the coordinators of the CEBs think that the 'traditional' line is going to die away of 'natural causes'²³. The CEBs hold to an idea of a *new conversion*, of *being born* again. They stress the fact that to belong to the *Comunidades* is to embrace a new *way of being* not just a membership of a group. The experience of the CEBs is conceived as a filter for interpreting the entire world. The language of the *Comunidades* uses symbols and cultural religious forms (e.g. procession) which belong to the realm of the 'traditional' Church, but they use them with 'new' contents.

The language of the *Comunidades* stresses self-introspection as a primary component of the identity of the subject. This is a central point of the teaching that the

drinking, drugs and 'bad' friendships) in order to belong to the community. Jehovah's Witnesses reject completely the political dimension and commitments to social welfare as part of their religious experience. Their dimension of the social is confined to their group. People are rewarded in accordance with their knowledge of sacred texts and the amount of service given to the cause of Jehovah. Much of their knowledge is based on a literal interpretation of the Bible, that literalism being taken as a source of strength in relation to other 'fake' religions, where - they argue - people do not 'know' the Bible. Nevertheless the interpersonal dimension is carefully taken into account. That makes people feel 'worthy' within the group. In fact, many seem to have converted after disappointing experiences with the Catholic clergy or within their Catholic religious community (Fortuny 1991). It is important, then, to consider the message of the CEBs as one among other religious discourses within a contested arena, and to examine why certain people (e.g. women, black people) get more involved in particular religious movements rather than others (Burdick 1992: 172, 144).

²³ This point, in the CEBs '*análisis de la realidad*' (analysis of reality), implies an evolutionist view of history. The 'old' hierarchical Church is the past, while CEBs represent the present and the future of the Church.

Jesuits have given to the **Comunidades** in Polanco. It is common to hear, in the CEBs, the notion of 'becoming a person', an agent who stands for his/her social and human rights. In the **Comunidades**, and especially among the Jesuits, there is a tendency to identify a lack of 'subjectivity' and of 'being a person' with an expression of 'traditional' religiosity. Full personhood is achieved through personal, group consciousness and action *upon* reality. 'Traditional' religion on the contrary is conceived as *acceptance* of reality and as change of personal aptitudes; acceptance calls for identification and lack of separation between the subject and the reality in which he/she lives. In this sense different orientations within the Church create distinct loci of identity.

Other elements are considered by the members of the CEBs to be distinct from the 'traditional' Church. These can be synthesized as follows: prayer is addressed on behalf of the group not only for personal needs; less attention is given to the figures of Saints as receivers of pleas, and more to them as human beings who showed a 'good' way of behaving; a new image of the priest and the clerical agents is promoted, and the overall new position of the laymen as active agents of evangelisation and pastoral action is stressed (Levine 1992; 1993). The pastoral agents portray the CEBs as an **Iglesia Joven**, a Church which is allowed to experiment and make mistakes. It is the Church 'que no la sabe todo..la iglesia en **busqueda**..la iglesia del caminar del pueblo' (Which does not know everything..the seeking Church..the Church made of the path of common people). This metaphor of the movement of the Church is very important within the CEBs and it embraces a theological statement.

Elio is one of the oldest coordinators in the Anunciación, who worked for a long time with the Jesuits and then pulled out from their team because of personal disagreements, but who came back to work in the CEBs formed in the Anunciación. He said in a coordinator's meeting:

Those of the traditional Church want to *know* God,
but this is impossible, it is only possible to

encounter him in the *service* of others (my emphasis).^c

Elio suggests that God cannot be known, he can only be experienced. To 'encounter' suggests movement, so humans can approach God through movement, through 'action'. God is in the life of each man, - 'in doing' not only in knowing -, as the realm of God is in the process of 'building' a liberated society (not in the end result, which is unknown) (Lehmann 1990: 126). Thus God must be approached through a third element outside one's own self: that is through social experience. Therefore in the CEBs, God is conceived of in a 'tri-dimensional' relation, and the Devil, *el Diablo*, is the denial of that 'tri-dimensionality'.

El Diablo is conceived within the CEBs in a different way than the 'traditional' Church. Devil is part of a discourse related to human suffering, and to the definition and boundaries of human and non-human agents (Parkin 1985:11,12) and is not only part of moral but also of ontological language (Pocock 1985). In the case of the CEBs, *el Diablo* is associated with the 'other', outside the community, and embraces notions of capitalist exploitation, of individualism versus notions of brotherhood and solidarity (Banck 1989). It is also a form of thinking, an attitude to life which comprehends being egoistic or selfish: it is '*pensar en uno mismo*' (think about oneself).

These beliefs were acted out, and transmitted in theatrical language, during the representation of the birth of Christ called *Pastorela*, (which took place in the *Anunciación* at Christmas 1991). The representation was performed by the youth group of the CEBs in front of a large group of parishioners. Joseph and Mary were portrayed as two *campesinos* (country-dwellers) who came to the city of Guadalajara and endured painful experiences finding their way around the city. Two major characters were the angel and the Devil. At the end the Devil was defeated by the angel and symbolically taken apart (his clothes torn off). His characteristics, such as selfishness, self-centredness, lack of solidarity, and alliance with the powerful, exploiting people were revealed. The Devil,

then, in the language of the CEBs is identified with the unjust structure of society and with the wrong will of those who reproduce it. The Devil is a human attitude and a condition of society rather than an agent in itself. The conception of the Devil as an agent, who creeps into people's bodies and minds and who is responsible for malice and wrongdoing, is a belief shared by both 'traditional' and popular religion.

In describing these characteristics of the CEBs, I spoke of the CEBs as if they were a unitary subject, but it is important to observe that the experience of the **Comunidades** is not homogeneous. **Comunidades** can constitute different arenas for interaction; they can be a moment for reflection and action upon the socio-political reality of the place; and they can be foci for political activism (Banck 1989). Moreover, they can also be gatherings, where concepts of 'change' and personal commitment are discussed by people who do not actively apply those principles to their personal life²⁴. This heterogeneity is clear in the present history of Polanco. At one level the clergy - diocesan and Jesuits - and part of the lay coordinators involved in the organisation of the **Comunidades** have an ideal - based on metaphors of organisation, community, conscientisation and awakening to socio-political action - of what the **Comunidades** should be, and they tend to see the reality of the neighbourhood in the light of that image. They find it difficult to acknowledge the tensions and the interpersonal problems which arise within the **Comunidades** and the fact that nowadays, in the Anunciación case, the **Comunidades** find it difficult to expand their base among the parishioners. Another level is constituted by the actual members of the **Comunidades**. Their representations and commitments to the work within **Comunidades** are often different

²⁴ Drogus (1990) points out, through a study of women's participation in the CEBs in São Paulo, that there is a tendency to assimilate the experience of CEBs into existing beliefs, and to interpret politics in terms of charity and service to the others, rather than as a form of 'conscientisation' which challenges the conditions of gender relations (see also chapter VII).

from these of the **promotores**. The case of the Anunciación shows that the clergy, and some part of the coordinators, represent the **Comunidades** in a polarized way within the Catholic Church. They often stress the image of 'us' and the 'other'²⁵. The 'us' is the **pueblo**, the poor, the exploited campesinos, the 'virginal' Mexican soil.. the 'other' is everything against the **pueblo**: the Mexican lay and clerical elites, the members of the 'traditional' Church, the religious 'sects', and 'penetration' by the North American invader...

The representation by some lay and clerical CEBs' **promotores** of themselves as the 'us' - community/**pueblo** - versus a representation of the 'other' - the 'traditional' Church centred on personal/'selfish' salvation of the soul - makes it difficult to accept the incongruence of individuals within such an 'us'/'them' model. Structuralist models do not account for overlapping categories. This is why, in a socio-economically diversifying *colonia* (as Polanco has become in the recent years) the language used by CEBs leaders, about a common identity with its root in poverty, fails to express the self-perception held by some of its inhabitants. Elements of personal sympathy and dislike play a major role in people's evaluation of such poles in everyday interaction.

²⁵ Todorov (1984) and Mason (1991) argue, in analyses of the Spanish during the time of the conquest, that the image a group creates of another is often based upon its own representation of the 'other' rather than upon the inherent characteristics of that other. The construction of the other is in a sense 'mythological' and closely connected to the power negotiations that the image of the 'other' creates within the group in which it is formulated. They argue that the image of the indigenous was constructed through 'European images of Europe's own repressed and outward projected Others' (Mason 1991:8).

3.3.1.1. CEBs AND JESUITS IN POLANCO

The roots of the present CEBs in Polanco lie in the Jesuits' 'plan' of intervention in the *colonia*, which I briefly examine through focusing on the clergy's position and believers' response in Polanco. In this section I argue that a hierarchical relation of power between clergy and laymen - which is a common feature within the 'traditional' Church - has been present in a 'disguised' form in the Jesuits' intervention too.

The tensions between ways of 'being the Church' observable at a micro level in Polanco reflect a tension at a wider level. Those contrasts are rooted in the long-standing²⁶ power struggle between Diocesan clergy and the Jesuits within the Roman Church (i.e. the General of the Jesuits has been considered a 'black Pope' with a power which is beyond the control of the Head of the Church). Guadalajara is a stronghold of the Jesuits in Mexico and their educational action has developed around the 'Instituto de Ciencias' (Esteban 1986). The Jesuits are often judged - by a part of the diocesan clergy - to be politically radical and to interfere in the politics of the parishes. The economical and 'ideological' autonomy of the Company of Jesus contrasts with the dependency of the priests in charge of the parishes on the charity of the parishioners and hierarchical 'subordination' to the diocese. This condition has characterized the two different forms of evangelisation which have taken place in Polanco.

As I described in chapter I, Polanco was a locus of confrontation between the Church and the State during the 1970s and 1980s, in which the Jesuits played a central role. On the one hand are the Jesuits, who had their 'plan' of intervention and whose priority has been to concentrate on this plan's success. The result of their action has had an effect not only

²⁶ The Jesuits were obliged to leave Mexico by order of the Spanish Crown (which defended the interest of the Vatican against the expansion of Jesuit influences in the colonies) in 1767 and came back to Mexico only at the beginning of the twentieth century.

upon the social history of Polanco and on the lives of some of its believers, but it has also had a positive impact on the 'authority' of the Jesuits' order within the dioceses of Guadalajara. On the other hand, the diocesan priests - until the installation of Padre Rodolfo - did not have a real structured 'plan' of evangelisation in Polanco. In contrast to the Jesuits, diocesan priests have to promote evangelisation in accordance with the characteristics of the people of their parish and to mould their action within the politics of the archiepiscopacy in charge.

The Jesuits had a fifteen year plan of intervention in Polanco from 1973²⁷. Their evangelisation targeted social awareness and subsequent popular mobilisation. The creators of Polanco's plan were two 'mythical' figures in Polanco: Padre Pedro Ariaga and Padre Ignacio Rodriguez. The main point of the plan was to *train a group of leaders* who, through the work of the CEBs, could carry out the process of evangelisation. Evangelisation for the Jesuits has to parallel an *análisis de la realidad* in its economical and socio-political aspects. Continuity between 'faith and life' targets people's commitment to structural change in society.

The plan was meant to help the formation of the 'new' Church: '*la Iglesia del cambio, de la transformación*' (the Church of change and transformation). Polanco became a 'trial' laboratory for the Jesuits' as it was chosen, in the early 1970s as 'the place' in which to live with the *pueblo*.²⁸ However, the facilities in the houses where they live were, and still are, very different from the living standards of the majority of the people in Polanco. So they are 'with 'the

²⁷ At end of 1991 Jesuit intervention in Polanco had shrunk: there were only two novices helping the organisation of both the OCIP and Radio Pueblo. By the beginning of 1992 one was allocated to work with students in the University of Guadalajara, and the other left the Company of Jesus.

²⁸ From their themes of discussion, it seems that Jesuits have an urgent need to 'understand' the *pueblo*, to share the life and to 'make' it aware of its socio-political reality.

pueblo, but, as some people in Polanco remark, they are not 'from' the pueblo, because they do not share either the economic situation or the cultural background²⁹ of the majority of people (a theme of comments made to me by some of the people currently involved in the CEBs such as Mauricio, Elio, and Gherónimo).

A similar Jesuit campaign was carried out in Santa Cecilia (a neighbourhood in the north east of Guadalajara) in the mid 1970s. The action of Jesuits there stirred up an old conflict between the diocesan priests and the Jesuits' spheres of power (Logan 1984), though in a less acute form than in the history of Polanco³⁰. However, in 1980 the Jesuits decided to pull out of Santa Cecilia (De La Peña 1989).

Jesuit rhetoric, which comes out in their description of their plan for Polanco' and in their present evangelisation in the Cerro del Cuatro, hinges upon 'warrior' metaphors such as: 'la vida es una lucha...tenemos que luchar por la justicia..la fe es un compromiso social de uno mismo..'. (Life is a struggle ..we have to fight for justice ..faith is a social commitment of the individual). This idea of life as a fight/conquest is embedded in the teaching of San Ignacio, the founder of the

²⁹ Nevertheless some changes are taking place among the Jesuits. The majority of their members used to come from the educated middle/upper classes. Nowadays there are more young novices who belong to that social milieu where Jesuits themselves operate.

³⁰ Logan writing about the Jesuits, the Mother of Sacred Heart and a group of 'traditionalist' priests operating in Santa Cecilia states that:

They avoid conflict by keeping to their realm of interest..the differences between them rarely surface to create obvious friction; in essence they agree to disagree. Nonetheless, an uneasy tension always lies just below the surface in their relationship to each other (Logan 1984: 94).

In the case of Polanco the tension between the priest of the Santa Magdalena, el cura Rodolfo and the Jesuits reached an extreme point in 1989. The priest 'obliged' the Jesuits to stop their intervention in the parish if it was outside the direction of the dioceses. He left them the space of the Cooperative, but he prevented them from working in the animation of the Comunidades in the parish.

Compañía de Jesús. The idea of personal evolution through a development of the will, the image of leaders as key figures in the process of evangelisation, and the priority of personal contact with the 'inner self' (through the **ejercicios espirituales**) are strong characteristics of the Company of Jesus. Moreover, the Company of Jesus insists on basing personal development on social interaction, through 'love which is service and through service which is love'.

Comments about the Jesuits among the people who are or have been in the CEBs in Polanco are twofold. On the one hand, there are those who believe that the Jesuits are the holders of the 'real' knowledge of the 'Iglesia del cambio'. On the other hand are those who were also involved but saw the limitations of the Jesuits intervention: that their interests in power and control were little different from many other bodies of the Church hierarchy.

Padre Cosimo, a diocesan priest, was, for a couple of years, in charge of the **Comunidades** of young people in the Santa Magdalena during the period of major activity of the Jesuits' 'plan'. He was sent for nine years to a small village in Jalisco because - people say - he was 'too' active, as a diocesan priest, in the CEBs mobilisation. Padre Cosimo is now critical of the Jesuits' work, though he believes in the importance of the **Comunidades**. In fact he has now been assigned to a **colonia popular** near Polanco and he organizes **Comunidades** with successful results:

The Jesuit has the tendency to lead.. he does not have the language of the **pueblo**..he cannot reach the heart of people..it is necessary to give people what they ask not what one wants.

Being a Jesuit has been described to me as being a holder of an 'American Express' card, in other words, having access to certain types of privileges. Some of the people who collaborated closely with the Jesuits felt 'used', and once they stood up for their own opinions they fell 'out of grace'. Jesuits have been criticized - by those who are not in favour with the CEBs or who have dropped out of them - as being very

cerebral, but unable to get to 'el corazón de la gente' (the heart of people).

Lalo a young man who worked with the Jesuits for seven years, and who thought for a while of becoming a Jesuit himself, comments:

The Jesuits do not let people grow, this is the problem. They want things done in their way, and if people want it differently they say to them that it is not correct, and they say this through reasoning, philosophically...so that they convince you. The Jesuits say you are worthy, but that you lack experience and that you need to grow; therefore people are not appreciated for what they are, and they feel frustrated. The Jesuits already know what they want to do, they do not ask people....^e

In the words of Elio a similar tension arises:

The Jesuits did not like the fact that the 'periferia'³¹ was working more than Polanco. They ignored us, they wanted Polanco to be outstanding. The Jesuit priest said what needed to be done and who would be in charge of it. Polanco wanted to use our work, but I did not want to be fooled (in the sense of being under someone's power), it is important that you and your work are taken into consideration^f

These and other 'private' people's comments, suggest that some in the **Comunidades** were made to feel a 'lack' of knowledge while the Jesuits 'had' the knowledge. As I pointed out above, in the 'new' Church the condition of ignorance is related to the Devil, therefore 'knowledge' becomes the means of salvation³². To construct the realm of God is, for the Jesuits, to 'know' the social, political and economical reality of everyday interaction. This challenges the position of the 'traditional' Church which - Jesuits argue - hinges upon a

³¹ The word **periferia** (suburb) defined a group formed in 1977 by people interested in the CEBs, organized by the Jesuits in Polanco, but who were living in the **colonias** Lopez Portillo, De la Virgen del Carmen, Balcones del Cuatros, Villa Guerreros and Echeverría. They too needed to organize themselves for a fair installation of basic services, the word **periferia** was related to the 'centrality' of Polanco's CEBs.

³² The experience of the **Comunidades** has been associated with early Puritans' and Protestant practices (Klein Goldwijk 1990, Smith 1991, Levine 1986).

division between faith and life, individual conversion and social transformation. Ontological claims, and the 'objectification' of reality carried out by the Jesuits evangelisation points to a specific human subjectivity (Foucault 1980:239). Moreover this objectification rests on a 'dividing practice' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1986: 208) between those who are 'in the path' and those who are not, between those who are with the *pueblo* and those who are not³³. This practice, because it tends to conceal its arbitrariness, legitimizes the position of those who utter it (Gledhill 1994: 141)

This critical review of the Jesuits' position should not diminish the positive results that the activity of the Jesuits has achieved in Polanco (chapter I). Nevertheless it is important to notice, for the sake of my argument, how the Jesuits set up a 'construction of knowledge' (of how to interpret pastoral issues) and fell into 'protagonism'³⁴.

The existence of a 'plan', the stress on education of leaders to transmit the message, and a strong will for leadership, have given the Jesuits a consistent hold in Polanco. Nevertheless, it also takes them away - in certain respects, and paradoxically - from the 'voices' of the people. Jesuit ideas of knowledge and evangelisation are based on the idea of the self-realizing individual as a religious, 'rational' actor, aware and engaged in egalitarian social interaction. However, in reality, the 'new' Church promoted by the Jesuits has often 'hierarchically' controlled the production and transmission of knowledge, even if their

³³ Jesuits separate 'true' (carried within the 'new' Church) and 'false' (expressed by the conservative/traditional Church) knowledge, and use the power attached to this truth/knowledge (Foucault 1980: 132).

³⁴ I use the term 'protagonism' to indicate the wish to be at the centre of attention. An example of 'protagonism' was the behaviour of a Jesuit novice who used to organize and be in charge of *Radio Pueblo*. He decided to prioritize the broadcasting, and the Radio took precedence over the other activities of the cooperative, to the disappointment of some lay members.

evangelisation differs from the 'traditional' Church in its style and its rhetorical themes³⁵. Those tendencies have carried on in present day forms of activity in the *Comunidades*, and they disguise certain forms of intolerance for those who are considered 'different'³⁶. The model of the CEBs in Polanco, which is based upon Jesuits' activity, rests on a redefinition of secular/religious and mundane/mystical domains. This has created a clear focus of identity for that part of the people of Polanco which has or had been actively engaged in CEBs activities. However, some of those presently involved in the CEBs have some doubts about such a balance:

The problem for the Jesuits is that for them faith is political commitment. Politics is part of life, but life is not politics, it is something more...⁶ (Mauricio, ex-coordinator CEBs in the Anunciación)

Concern is also voiced about the 'egalitarian' structure of the *Comunidades*, which are presently organized in the parish of the Anunciación by Padre Nemo and the Carmelites Sisters (see below), since the Jesuits gave up their coordination. Then the 'utopian', progressive self-image of the CEBs may at times 'remain authoritarian in spirit, popular in name alone' (Levine 1985:317).

³⁵ People's comments suggests that this Foucaultian thesis can be read into Jesuit practice:

a 'regime of truth' composed of a field of problems, questions and responses determined by the continuity or discontinuity, clarity or obscurity of the administered ensemble of relations which constitute the partition between present and past, 'new' and 'old'. (Foucault 1980: 242)

³⁶ A comment of Gherónimo a member of the CEBs in the Anunciación:

hay que amar a todos, no hay que tener odio, pero yo he visto que hay odio en muchas personas en la CEBs, odio para la gente rica, divisiones entre buenos y malos muy fuertes.

(We need to love everybody, we do not have to hate, but I have seen that there is hate in many people in the CEBs, hate for the rich, strong divisions between good and bad).

3.3.2. 'NEW' AND 'TRADITIONAL' PRIESTHOOD

I turn now to the tensions between the 'new' and the 'traditional' Church as they have developed in the parish of the Anunciación. I have chosen to discuss the case of the present and the former priests of the Anunciación because their personalities, orientations and actions within the parish embody explicitly these tendencies within the Church. The two priests differ in many respects but at the bottom they share a position of exclusivity.

Padre Nemo arrived at the church of the Anunciación in March 1988³⁷. He is in his early fifties, and comes from a poor family in Cocula which cultivated the land and did woodwork in Cocula. His parents were in charge of the housekeeping of the village Church and, since his early youth, Padre Nemo had been inclined towards priesthood. The priest who was in charge of the parish in his village became an influential model for him:

The priest was on the side of the **guaramiles**, the poorest land workers who sow with hoes in the hill.. so I realized that I had to be on the side of the poorest.¹

He entered the seminary when he was fourteen and he felt he was entering a big family:

Since I was a child I realized that the life of the priest could have been oriented towards the **pueblo**...there was much missing in my **pueblo**, there was lack of services, it was like an abandoned **pueblo**.¹

The stress on solidarity with the **campesinos** is a constant theme in his account. He portrays them as the good and exploited people, against the rich, 'those of the government'. His first appointment was in the Civil Hospital of Guadalajara where he was already sensitive to injustice and abuses towards common people, and he became aware of the attitude of some of the religious hierarchy. **El cambio** (the

³⁷ The first time I saw him he seemed sad to me. His smile was sweet, but he lacked joy; he gave me the impression of a tamed animal who could not afford to show his hidden sadness and anger to the world.

change) since Vatican II, represented for him a transformation in this attitude:

One should not be bound to the law, but to the spirit of the law, as Jesus was: that the law should be in the service of the person not the person to the law.^j

Before coming to Polanco, Padre Nemo spent three years in Cuquio, in the region of Los Altos de Jalisco. He was then transferred from Cuquio because the organisation of the **Comunidades** worried the big land owners of the area. He was then assigned to Polanco by Cardinal Posadas, who knew that the parish had already reached its peak in the 'new' Church movement, so that Padre Nemo would find it difficult to organize the CEBs again.

Padre Nemo's ideal vision of religious hierarchy is that of a hierarchy of service, not of power. In his view, the CEBs are not a movement of the Church; they are the *Church in movement*. The CEBs are not only an encounter, or a way of organizing social and religious life: they are a *way of being* (Levine:1992). The CEBs are portrayed in his words as an 'innate' property of social, spiritual and religious beings:

The true CEB is not the group which meets in the community [in the spatial sense]: here there are seven areas, so it would mean seven communities...all the life of the Church is in the community: the prayer, the sacraments, the missionary spirit, the prophetic spirit, the social serviceIt is like a seed where everything is small, so it is as if the whole Church was in the Base Communities.^k

Hence his explanations why the CEBs are in crisis in Polanco are twofold: on the one hand, the hostile attitude of the former priest, Padre Francisco, towards the **Comunidades**; on the other hand, the rising interest in the charismatic movement, which used to hold regular meetings in the parish before the arrival of Padre Nemo. Neither of these causes suggests any self-criticism of the way in which he has organized the CEBs in Polanco.

Padre Nemo, like the Jesuits, believes that the CEBs are the model for all the other movements within the Church, to the extent that the solid establishment of the CEBs in the parish

is seen as prior to any development of evangelisation groups. However, at present he sees the other movements as potential threats to the CEBs after the hostile period the CEBs underwent during Padre Francisco's time. Nonetheless, some of the members of the CEBs have been part of other 'traditional' groups such as the *Adoración Nocturna*, *La Vela del Santísimo* and *El Movimiento Familiar Cristiano*. Multiple membership is not perceived as an ideological inconsistency, but possibly as complementary. Padre Francisco openly supported these 'traditional' groups, while Padre Nemo says:

But all the other movements have a model of the Church, the Church before Vatican II, the traditionalist, triumphal, individualist model, all of them carry on with the old Church.. the new model is the new Church, the Church of the poor, the missionary Church, the Church/community'¹

For him the fact that some people belong to the CEBs and to these groups at the same time is explained by the embryonic state of the CEBs. He realizes that in Polanco the *Comunidades* are not yet able to fulfil the need for mysticism and prayers, but he believes they will be able to do so in the future. CEBs tend to associate a 'traditional' type of religiosity with the magical, fatalistic view of religion, and counterpose it to a 'true' religion grounded in consciousness and social action. This raises crucial issues within the CEBs of how to integrate 'popular religion' and transform it from 'manipulated consciousness and ritual distraction' (Lehmann 1990:128) into a 'true' language of the people at the grass roots level³⁸.

Padre Nemo argues that people in the 'traditional' Church are used to following clerical figures; in many *Comunidades* they would like him to be there during their meetings. It is the same for the female clergy: if the sister cannot participate in the *Comunidad*, the group often does not meet. This dependency upon clerical agents for the

³⁸ This difficulty is expressed by people turning to adoration (e.g. see the case of Pancho below), because in CEBs action there is not enough space for 'personal, mystical' contact with divine agents.

organisation and maintenance of the CEBs has been noticed as one of the major problems in CEBs practice (Levine 1993a:179).

Parishioners complain, moreover, that Padre Nemo does not visit people in their homes and that he is never in the church because he often attends meetings outside the parish. Some parishioners also express disapproval that Padre Nemo is not putting enough effort into the construction of the parish church, while Padre Francisco is remembered as having been very interested in the issue.

Padre Francisco was born in Guadalajara, and was originally from a large lower middle-class family. His family is of a higher socio-economic level than that of Padre Nemo. He arrived in Polanco in 1980, when the Anunciación was still a *capillania* dependent on the Santa Magdalena. He was drawn to clerical life by a contact he had with Salesians and he felt:

The necessity for something transcendental -
because life is short, and to have a long-lasting
plan in life...and the necessity to be in a place
where one is needed.¹¹

He left the Anunciación after eight years for 'motivos de salud' (health reasons). He had become an alcoholic and was able to overcome the addiction through the help of *Alcohólicos Anónimos*. Padre Francisco is now in charge of a church in a quiet village near Lake Chapala.

During his period in Polanco Padre Francisco put much effort into the church building-work. He would stand at the church entrance at the end of mass and personally ask for charitable donations towards the church's construction. He recognized that members of the community contributed in different ways to the construction, with material contribution or with physical work. People met in the physical church and that was the centre of activities. In contrast today some parishioners, who are not inclined to the work of the CEBs, comment about the emptiness of the Anunciación: 'está vacía.. no hay nadie..parece muerta' (it is empty... there is nobody..it seems dead). This uncertainty can be related to the fact that the physical church represented the centre of the village life. For many middle aged and older people in

Polanco, the village of origin is perceived as a space where the sacred and the profane are separated. From this arises the resistance that many have to the atomization of the Church down to the level of the calle, as proposed by the CEBs, because this division challenges the separation between sacred and profane space.

Padre Francisco argues that the construction of the church created a sense of unity among the people while he was at the head of the parish:

All the people worked in the temple; all the **pueblo** committed itself and worked with joy. You know that people express it with a giving attitude if they like something ...if they take care of the temple which is the product of their life, God will hear them because they gave part of their lives.¹¹

Padre Francisco had a good relationship with the former archbishop (Cardinal Salazar), and Cardinal Posadas, although he did not get along with the Jesuits (because, as he confidentially told me, 'he had been instructed' to behave in that way towards them). During his time as parish priest there was a group of people who kept away (and were kept away) from the parish. That group consisted of the coordinators of the CEBs, who were 'clandestinely' organized by the Jesuits based in the Santa Magdalena. While later, when Padre Nemo arrived, the group which collaborated closely with Padre Francisco drastically decreased its participation in parish activities and never really joined the work of the CEBs.

Francisco's main critique of the Jesuits is that they wanted to do everything in their own way:

It is like having a parish within another parish,
it is like having more than one head.⁰

Francisco argues that he is not against 'el cambio' but that people in Polanco were not mature enough for that. He defines Polanco as a poor neighbourhood, composed of people of the **pueblos**, 'gente noble y sencilla, gente menos problemática' (noble and humble, less problematic people). The problem for Padre Nemo -he says - is that he failed to understand this human nature fully :

One needs to go one step at time; [Padre Nemo] does not realize how people are, the people are from the

countryside: they are humble, they do not know about Nicaragua. People's problem is their drug-addicted child...Their problem is in everyday life, they can just manage that; there is no need to discuss this and that...so they can live quietly and at ease.^p

Padre Francisco's idea about Polanco's people is centred on the necessities of everyday interaction, and on the limitation of outlook these necessities impose on people lives. They can act only for, and within, the satisfaction of their basic everyday needs but not as a conscious part of a wider socio-structural reality. However, Padre Francisco is conscious of the differences between his conception of the Church and the one held by the CEBs and Padre Nemo. He is aware of multiple religious identities, focused on different balances between sacred/profane mystical/mundane, but, for him, these tensions within the Catholic Church seem to create confusion, rather than pluralism:

We, the priests, are responsible for inspiring different mentalities...they [people of the CEBs] are too concerned with what is here and now, and we are said to be too concerned with the hereafter.^q

Both Padre Nemo's and Francisco's visions of the Church hinge upon long-standing Catholic idea of the separation between the flesh and the soul, the manifest versus the non-manifest, the mystical versus the mundane world. Nevertheless, while one seeks to bring these elements together - challenging the hierarchical power structure of the Church - the other maintains these divisions as a core element of Church institutional reproduction.

3.3.2.1. CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES BETWEEN 'NEW' AND 'TRADITIONAL' PRIESTHOOD

The experiences of Padre Nemo and Padre Francisco in the parish of the Anunciación raise issues about identity in the religious community in Polanco, and highlight tensions and convergence between the experience of the *Comunidades* and 'traditional' groups.

Padre Francisco represents the 'father': the direct bridge between laymen and the religious hierarchy which, in the last instance, is 'closer' to God. The pyramidal hierarchy and the notion of religious intermediacy are key points in this view. Moreover, the priest personifies a conception of a Church as a sacred physical space. Padre Francisco's preoccupation with finishing the construction of the Anunciación suggests that the temple is the heart of the religious life and that it has a 'centripetal' force to agglutinate people. The ideal of Padre Nemo instead is to weaken the figure of the priest as the supreme mediator between God and the faithful. The priesthood should be there to counsel, to serve, but not to pronounce authoritatively as to what is or is not authentic 'knowledge'. The idea is to transform a vertical Church into a horizontal '*Iglesia de la gente*' (Church of the people). The principle of the CEBs is to move away from the temple, to create a sacred space: the neighbourhood. Therefore the Church becomes a 'centrifugal' Church, which moves from the temple to the people rather than bringing the people to the temple.

In their rhetoric, both priests use the word *pueblo* but with different and overlapping meanings. Padre Francisco refers to the *pueblo* as a sum of different *pueblos* (villages of origin). The *pueblo* has *child-like* qualities: it is innocent, simple, needs to be held by hand and is vulnerable. It is also close to nature. It represents other people's past, all those elements that those who are other than *pueblo* have lost by getting closer to 'civilisation'. The *pueblo* has a popular knowledge, but its ignorance prevents it from improving its socio-economic situation. For Padre Nemo, instead, the *pueblo*

is more a structural category defined in opposition to the ruling class which exploits it. Differences and idiosyncrasies between *pueblos* are blended into the *pueblo*: the 'specific local communities' have to merge in the 'general brotherhood' (Banck 1989:20). The *pueblo becomes an agent* in itself, it takes responsibilities, it fights, it responds and it creates. But there is a tension between *pueblo* and *pueblos*. This divergence was clear when Padre Nemo decided to celebrate the day of the Virgin of the Anunciación in a 'new' way.

The procession, which started in the seven different zones of the parish, converged on the Temple. A group of fewer than one hundred people participated, the majority being members of the *Comunidades*. Each person held the image of the Saint of his *pueblo* of origin. During the Mass Padre Nemo asked groups with the same Saint to identify themselves, while he stressed that the Virgin protects humanity, justice and freedom and that she teaches us all the 'new project' of God. Padre Nemo said: '*vamos a hacer nuestro pueblo de la Anunciación*' (we are going to build *our pueblo* of the Anunciación). So the *pueblos* of origin are the source of personal identity, but because of their specificity they can be an impediment to identification with the *pueblo*. Through the procession Padre Nemo tried to overcome that tension. This tension rests at the base of the definition of a 'popular subject' (Levine 1993a), and particular attention has to be paid to the language and experiences through, and with, which that common identity is constructed and diversity is dealt with.

There is another major distinction between the two images of the Church expounded by the two priests. The CEBs attempt to challenge the 'traditional' relation between Christ and humans, and therefore between the natural and supernatural. Christ is portrayed in his human, adult dimension³⁹, and the

³⁹ This image is contrasted with the images of a Christ in pain on the cross and the image of an infant Christ both of which are associated with the 'traditional' religion. 'Traditional' religion is part of popular religion, as the latter has been characterized as an 'ethos' of passivity based

exaltation of his humanity increases the spirituality of everyday human interaction. People are encouraged to see Christ's spirit in the people around them and to see sacredness in daily life. However, in practice, social interaction is often seen in terms of the dynamics of power within the social structure, while idiosyncrasies of interpersonal relations are often dismissed. The explanation why people drop out of CEBs, for instance, is often given in terms of 'sinful', psychological aspects of the individual : 'por flojera... porque le gusta más la tele' (for laziness...because he/she likes TV more), but interpersonal problems such as personality clashes are hardly spoken of as possible causes.

An extreme, but revealing case of personality clash took place in the Anunciación in the summer of 1991. A conflict broke out between Padre Nemo and two coordinators - Mauricio and Soledad. Mauricio is a building worker who came from Armeria, a village on the Colima coast, in 1988. He was called to Polanco by the priest himself, and they worked in close collaboration both in the construction of the church and in the promotion of the CEBs group. His influence over people and his charisma grew larger and larger, and that created envy and confrontations with some of the coordinators and the sisters who were working that year in the parish. This group put pressure on Padre Nemo, so that the priest, in a meeting of the coordinators, confronted the situation and blamed Mauricio and Soledad for following *their* programme and not the 'programme' of the parish. Since then, Mauricio and Soledad have been removed from working in the parish and prevented from participating in other CEBs activities organized in Guadalajara. This case was distressing for many coordinators because they questioned how the will of a few was oriented to isolating members of the same CEBs. As a consequence of this

on: socialisation of time and space (the centrality of reproductive cycles and of one's own community\family), worship of the blessed Virgin, God as the eternal Father, Christ's birth and his passion on the cross (Dussel 1986).

'internal' confrontation some of the coordinators left for a period, or for good.

When power conflicts arose, Padre Nemo used the notion of a 'programme' of the parish, of a certain 'knowledge', which Mauricio failed to respect: he could not have his 'programme', he could not be a producer of 'knowledge'. Some complain that the priest and the sisters often attend seminars outside the parish, but that they do not share that knowledge with the people in the groups. They tend to keep it to themselves, they are the ones 'who grow', leaving the others behind. The issue at stake in the Padre Nemo-Mauricio confrontation was in fact not the 'plan' itself, but the power balance between laymen and clergy, and among laymen themselves. The incident showed a process not much different from the hierarchical 'traditional' Church. Issues of authority, legitimation and interpretation of communality as consensus within the hierarchy are characteristic of the relations between leaders and members of the CEBs in Polanco, even if many of its **promotores** would not openly recognize such aspects.

3.3.3. THE 'TRADITIONAL' CHURCH IN POLANCO

In this section I turn to the example of two groups which are considered part of the 'traditional'⁴⁰ Church by the clergy and some lay promoters of the CEBs in the Anunciación, and discuss the ways in which members of these groups perceive themselves especially in relations to the CEBs.

The term 'traditional' is used by the members of the CEBs to define a certain type of religiosity. The people who participate in groups other than the CEBs do not call themselves 'traditionalist', but see themselves -to a greater or lesser degree - as followers of religious traditions ('tradiciones religiosas'). The stress on personal salvation and on the transcendental runs parallel to worship oriented toward everyday life-issues. People pray for their well being while asking God for 'personal' favours. It is within this framework that people practice *mandas*⁴¹.

The 'traditional' view cannot be attributed exclusively to old people, nor can this type of Catholic religious practice be associated with any specific age group. Nevertheless, attention to Catholic religious life in Polanco is greater among adults and old people than among the younger generation. To sketch the different degrees of the 'traditional', I have used two examples within the parish, one of a 'central' and the other of a more conservative position⁴². The point I argue is that both groups focus on dimensions - of the family and

⁴⁰ People in Polanco who are not part of any parish group do not fit exactly into these 'new'-'traditional' categories, but may be placed on a continuum between the two.

⁴¹ *Mandas* are vows made to holy figures normally in case of major personal or family health problems. If the problems are 'miraculously' solved, the person has to pay off the 'help' to the holy figure, normally with pilgrimages to Holy places or with a period of personal bodily sacrifice (e.g. giving up smoking or one's favourite food).

⁴² I could have chosen other groups which are considered alternatives to the CEBs such as the charismatic movement, but I decided to use the example of the *Movimiento Familiar Cristiano* and the *Adoración Nocturna* because their members have had relevant roles in the development of the history of the parish of the Anunciación.

personal aptitudes - which are underplayed in current practices of the CEBs in the Anunciación. Moreover, the groups are perceived as incompatible with the CEBs to a greater extent by those leaders (e.g Don Luís and Doña Estrella, see below) who have lost influence within the parishes due to the change of the parish priests (Padre Nemo, and Padre Rodolfo and their own inclination to the **Comunidades**). In this case, religious membership can also be read as a form of appropriation and maintenance of symbolic capital - in the sense of access to resources, and attainment of prestige and legitimisation within the parish community.

3.3.3.1. EL MOVIMIENTO FAMILIAR CRISTIANO (MFC): SIMILARITIES TO AND DIFFERENCES FROM THE CEBs

This movement was created in the early 1960s after the break-up of the ACM (Acción Católica Mexicana) and in principle it is a lay movement relatively independent of the religious hierarchy (Chonca Malo 1986). Its work in Guadalajara has been supported by Archbishop Posada and there are more than three thousand members working actively in the town. The MFC has a middle class base, but it has also spread into the lower classes. MFC's training plan is a three year programme organized by laymen together with the clergy and concentrate on the upbringing of Catholic children and on family relations. The MFC three-year training course covers different subjects: the person from childhood to adulthood; relations between couples and children; and the objectives of the Catholic family within the post - Vatican II Church. In Polanco, while Padre Francisco was in charge of the Parish, there used to be a group of fifteen couples who met regularly, and the group received support from the parish of the Santa Magdalena too. Nowadays those members who still participate organize themselves outside the parish structure of the Anunciación, and their meetings often take place in other colonias.

Padre Nemo has refused to support the activities of the MFC in the parish on the grounds, mentioned above, that the CEBs should become stronger in the parish before other

movements joined in the parish work. Nevertheless, in Polanco I met different couples in the CEBs who were or had been involved in the *Movimiento*. Padre Nemo metaphorically compares the MFC and other non-CEBs movement with 'sweets' that children choose instead of eating the main meal (the *Comunidades*).

For couples in Polanco, belonging to the MFC has been a chance to get to know many people of different class backgrounds, and to learn about improving communication within the family. The experience of the MFC helps them to develop solidarity within the family and to learn to *listen* to others. There are six basic rules in the MFC: team life, hospitality, a life of prayer, commitment to service, good use of material goods and study (of general topics related to family life). Some of these characteristics are similar to those of the CEBs, but they can also have different meanings. The idea of *servicio* (service) is one example. The MFC hinges upon a notion of service as a form of *sanctification*; marriage itself is a responsibility of mutual sanctification between husband and wife. In the CEBs by contrast the focus is on Christ rather than the Saints, and service is perceived as a human bond of social solidarity and communal identity: a redemption of a social rather than personal sin⁴³.

The Holy Spirit is a central theme in the prayer of the MFC. This is a point in common with the charismatic movement⁴⁴. Moreover MFC members believe strongly in miracles in the cult/image of the Holy Virgin and the *Sagrado Corazón*

⁴³ Drogus also pointed out the notion of 'structural sin within the CEBs: "structural sin", the source of social injustice, is conceived of as embedded in capitalist society, where relations of production necessarily result in unjust exploitation of workers' (Drogus 1990:66). See also chapter IV for an in depth discussion of 'structural sin' in medical aetiology.

⁴⁴ There is no charismatic movement active in Polanco at the moment. This movement, widespread in many Guadalajara *colonias* (definitely, much more so than CEBs), is strongly criticized by the people of the CEBs. The charismatics are seen as those who 'just sing and move their hands' (typical of their 'cathartic' group prayers) rather than question social reality.

(Sacred Heart of Christ). They - like the people of the CEBs - talk about '*buscar el cambio*', but with a different stress. The change desired is in *attitudes* of the individual towards his/her spouse and towards God himself. It is not a change addressed to power relations in society. Last but not least, in MFC meetings I have observed a modernist attitude, typical of a certain type of Catholicism. The whole past of pre-Catholic/indigenous beliefs and cultures, is regarded as ignorance rather than as a heritage of cultural pluralism. The attitude of the CEBs, in this respect, is instead to integrate that pluralism within the 'new' Church.

The 'traditionalist' conceptions present in the MFC can become source of inspiration for the everyday life of their members, as the case of Estrella shows. For many years, the coordinators of the group in Polanco have been Doña Estrella and her husband Luís. Her judgement on the work of the CEBs is negative, and her political orientation is towards PAN. She has been working in the MFC since the beginning of the 1970s, and she was at one time President both of the *Acción Católica* and *Caritas* in the Parish of the Santa Magdalena⁴⁵. Doña Estrella appears as to be a very severe woman but when I went to her house and talked about her upbringing I was able to see where that severity originated. She was brought up in a *ranchito* and then moved to Tenamastlán, a village in Jalisco. What she most remembered of her infancy and adolescence was a desire to improve, to learn and study, but under the constant threat of being told off or beaten up by her father. This idea - to act in life for punishment or reward - parallels her idea of God. The fear of her father is similar to the fear of God's punishment.

Doña Estrella's early life could also explain her sense of anger typical of a *persona corajuda* (angered person). She

⁴⁵ *Acción Católica* is a group of women who are in charge of helping in the maintenance of the temple. They arrange flowers, wash curtains, and give that 'feminine touch' to the temple. *Caritas* is a world-wide Catholic movement which focuses on charity to the poorest, as part of the redemption of one's own soul.

is resentful of Padre Rodolfo and Padre Jorge, of the parish of the Santa Magdalena, who support the Grupos de Barrio, because they do not pay attention to her and to the work of the groups with which she is involved. She does not like the work of the CEBs because the people who are involved in them call for social change but, she says, do not improve their personal daily behaviour:

What can they do to decrease drug addiction. It is not a question of getting rid of the social dirt, but my own dirt, and as a neighbour I ask myself what am I not doing?... They say they do, but they do not do anything.^r

Estrella thinks we can change our destiny, and that heaven is the reward for the suffering we undergo on the earth, if that suffering is dedicated to the glory of God instead of being a denial of it⁴⁶. The motivation to exalt God therefore is central to the meaning of human action. However, if a person 'se porta bien le va a ir bien' (behaves well it is going to go well for him); if one misbehaves his life will bear the consequences: the individual is to blame for the results of his life. Therefore drug-addiction and poverty are explained in terms of an individual's inabilities or shortcomings in his/her family's religious education. The imagery present in the CEBs suggests a second birth - a sort of 'break' with the past - while the MFC is perceived by its members as an extension or continuation of previous forms of Catholic worship. However, the MFC also represents an opportunity for self-reflection and, to a certain extent, introspection which can be conceived as a continuation of the CEBs work.

Gherónimo, the only son of Doña Marisol and Don Domingo and father of five children is an active member of the CEBs in the Anunciación, but at one point he also belonged to the MFC. Even if he is very supportive of the work of Padre Nemo, he perceives the limits of maintaining the 'other' separated from the 'us':

⁴⁶ I personally prefer to use the neutral rather than the masculine gender to refer to God.

In the CEBs they want to talk about liberation, change of structure, but they do not pay attention to the family and the person. Some people come to the meetings and they leave everything else aside, but this is a mistake. The problem is that in the **Comunidades** they talk very little about the family, and many people in the **Comunidades** have strong family problems. Padre Nemo believes that the MFC has arisen from the right wing of the Church and that it is in contradiction with the CEBs, but many in the parish do not think so.⁵

Gherónimo, who likes to keep away from the 'political' controversies within the parish of the Anunciación, is supportive but also critical of the position of the clergy and the Jesuits. He infers that the problem is that the clergy has preconceived and rigid ideas about the way in which things 'should be' and is not able fully to grasp the specificity of people's lives. In his analysis, people are much more flexible and able to relate and bring together different religious messages into their everyday lives if they are not involved in power struggles within the parish.

This is illustrated by the case of Elsa, the wife of Alfonso, a coordinator of the CEBs as well as a member of the MFC. She sees her experience in the movement as a chance to develop new friendships. The MFC is seen by her as 'cemento para servir' (as a base to serve). Elsa recognizes some differences between the works of the MFC and CEBs. The MFC works more in depth, it is more complete because in the CEBs the Bible is read, though not much of that interpretation stays in the mind. She affirms that the experience in the MFC has helped her to improve her family relations, while she feels that the experience in the CEBs has helped to understand a bit more about issues she knew nothing about, it has not had the same impact in her everyday life. However Elsa perceives a similar goal between the two groups, which is to improve one's own life through correction of bad habits and thinking. Both experiences have been for her like 'taking away a bandage from the eyes'.

As with the CEBs, the vision of the leaders seems different that of some of the members of the MFC. While a leader, such as Estrella, tends to focus on difference and

opposition, members like Elsa and Gherónimo, interpret differences more as complementarities.

3.3.3.2. THE EXTREME 'TRADITIONALISM': LA ADORACION NOCTURNA

Whilst the MFC can be seen as complementary to the CEBs, the *Adoración Nocturna*, seems to share little with the *Comunidades*. The relation between human and divine agents in the two groups is based on different values. But once again, the opposition between these two tendencies again seems stronger in the words of the leader (who has been close to Padre Francisco)- than in those of other members of the *Adoración Nocturna* and its female counterpart the *Vela del Santísimo*.

The *Adoración Nocturna*⁴⁷ is a small but cohesive group of men who meet every last Saturday evening of the month in the parish of the *Anunciación*. They pray all night long in groups of four. This is a sacrifice they offer to the Holy Christ in recognition of the suffering he undertook for humanity's salvation. This practice recalls Christ's meditation on the Mount of Olives. The corresponding female organisation, the group of the *Vela del Santísimo*, meets to pray to the Holy Christ through canticles and rosaries.

In the *Adoración Nocturna*, as its name suggests, the primary goal of the group is to adore⁴⁸ and guard the reliquary of the *Santísimo* where the eucharist is stored. Their members (a group of ten/fifteen in the parish of the *Anunciación*) stress the idea of mortal sin, and the need for divine forgiveness. The *Adoración* searches for an intimate dialogue with God away from the distractions of society. In this dialogue, the believers confess their miseries and

⁴⁷ *Adoración Nocturna*'s foundation can be traced back to the pontificate of Pius VII in 1809, and in Mexico was established in the year 1900.

⁴⁸ The difference between adoration and veneration has been discussed in the CEBs. Adoration is identified with the 'traditional' Church's image worshipping, while veneration is considered to be the prayers dedicated to a Catholic truth symbolized by an Holy image.

problems to Jesus. They ask him for the necessary strength for the final judgment: 'la gracia de la perseverancia final'. In the Adoración there is the idea that other people's redemption can be achieved through one's own sacrifice:

The 'adorador nocturno' asks God's forgiveness of his sins, and tries to make up to God for those who do not ask for his forgiveness..for everybody without exception, he asks for the sins of the nation and the whole world to be forgiven.^t
(Ritual de la Adoración Nocturna Mexicana, p.16).

The Adoración worship represents a moment of meditation which implies 'real' love, sacrifice and expiation⁴⁹. The goal of the prayer is to go beyond the illusory body and get in touch with one's soul. Matter is conceived as inferior to the soul:

The body is a cover, we have a heart, a heart which is not the one that the worms eat, it is the soul; all this [indicating the body] is impregnated with the soul.^u (Don Manuel, a member of the Adoración and the Refugianos)

So the soul is a bridge to God and to the knowledge of his will and a denial of the body is essential to understand the nature of the sacred.

This central character of the Adoración Nocturna is opposed to the way in which Elio, of the Comunidades, talks about God (see previous section page 118). God, in the Adoración Nocturna is the investigator of the human soul, he can see what we try to hide: he is a 'divine' Father of his human children. The God/human dialogue is a dual rather than a tri-dimensional relation. This duality is also present in the experience of the women who belong to the Vela del Santísimo. In their accounts the figure of Christ is depicted as a 'physical' entity, as a presence, who has come and visited them in their houses in moments of particular sufferance or blessing and helps to sort out painful situations. If the 'traditional' Church may be depicted by the CEBs as interested in the

⁴⁹ This recalls the life of Christ, and especially his suffering, as the root of his holiness. In relation to the CEBs, the joyful element in the sacred is played down.

'transcendental', but not in the everyday reality, paradoxically the language of its members is very 'physical' and oriented towards sensory perception of the divine (e.g. being touched on the shoulder by Christ, feeling the presence of the Virgin in one's own bedroom...).

The leader of the group of the *Adoración Nocturna* in Polanco is Don Luís, a big man who owns a corner shop in the *Calle siete* just off the *Anunciación*. He is married to Eva (who belongs to the *Vela del Santísimo*), they have ten children. His political position is inclined toward the PRI: he has become general secretary at the regional level, learning to read and write for the post. Don Luís was close to Padre Francisco, and became his 'right arm' while he was in Polanco. Since Padre Nemo arrived his activity within the Church has been limited to the *Adoración Nocturna* and he, with other *fieles* (loyal people) of Padre Francisco, now attends other churches for Sunday mass functions. Don Luís had a severe conflict with Padre Nemo, formally about the question of a sum of money he, and others of the 'old group' of Padre Francisco, held in trust for the construction of the *Anunciación*. At the end of 1988, the situation became so tense that Don Luís' group asked the archiepiscopate to remove Padre Nemo. Don Luís' move was unsuccessful, so he and those close to Padre Francisco pulled out of the parish.

Don Luís assumes that behind the religious activities of laymen there is always the control and responsibility of the clergy, and that it is the clergy who mislead the believers ('los padres de las CEBs envían la gente al frente para que se quemé' (the priests of the CEBs send people to the front to get burnt)). His criticism of CEBs centres on the fact that members profess love and brotherhood, but lack these qualities in their interaction with the wider Catholic community.

So it is clear from the dispute between members of the *Adoración Nocturna* and the CEBs that affiliation to religious groups within the Catholic Church is not just a question of moral and spiritual convictions, but also of control of symbolic capital. Status, prestige and power can be acquired

by being in the group supported by the present priest, and can be lost if the group falls out of grace.

However, membership of CEBs and 'traditional' religious groups are not mutually exclusive. I found a counter-case of a member of the **Adoración** who was, at the same time, an active member of the OCIP and CEBs in the parish of Santa Magdalena. Don Pancho became an **Adorador** after many years in the CEBs. He was aware of the difference between the two groups:

The message of the **Adoración Nocturna** is very different ; the **Adoración Nocturna** is an action that I have always known, nevertheless I had never practised. I tell father Rodolfo that I feel ashamed to have discovered the **Adoración** at the age of sixty, but I am enthusiastic and God appreciates it. The **Adoración Nocturna** is to be in dialogue with God our Father and to devote some hours [in prayer] to him, while the CEBs are more action-oriented. In the **Adoración Nocturna** one is directed in one way while in the CEBs in another.^v

The experience of Pancho points to the need for a balance between the 'mystical' and the 'enactment' of religious beliefs. Thus, as I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the dimension of modernization and 'rationalization' of the CEBs message is experienced as lacking 'mystical' and devotional aspects. These cases of double membership are therefore not experienced as contradictory but as complementary to each other.

While Padre Rodolfo encourages Pancho - because he believes in the diocesan plan for the parish as an umbrella for different tendencies within the Church (he also wants to be on good terms with the Archbishop, avoiding the radical position of the Jesuits) - Padre Nemo sees the CEBs as the primary body of the Church in the parish of the Anunciación. For him the other groups should be filtered through experience of the CEBs. Hence membership in different Catholic religious groups within the parishes indicates distinct interplays between human and divine agents as well as the nature of, and the legitimisation of, knowledge and power within clerical and lay relationships.

3.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed some of the tensions within the Mexican Church that appear at the micro level in Polanco, and the parallel tendencies of the 'new' and the 'traditional' Church to set up boundaries between self and group identities and between theological statement and religious practices.

The 'traditional' tendency - as seen by the CEBs - rests, to a greater or lesser degree, on the maintenance of hierarchical power between clergy and laymen; on a change in personal attitudes within the family; an acceptance of, rather than an action upon social reality; and on an intimate dialogue with God as well as 'sensory' perception and experience of the divine. The experience of the CEBs, on the other hand, rests on a challenge to the dichotomy sacred/secular and to the hierarchical division of power between clergy and laymen, but in Polanco it leaves unaddressed 'personal' issues such as the improvement of family relations and interpersonal clashes. Therefore, I agree with Burdick who argues, through a study of a Brazilian case, that the progressive Church of the CEBs 'presents domestic problems as secondary to the "really important" issues of the world beyond the household' (Burdick 1992: 176).

CEBs aim for a change of communal consciousness and a knowledge of God through acting in the world. Experience of them calls for symbolic thinking rather than literal interpretation of the Bible, as well as reflection about one's own place in a context wider than the family and close community levels (see also chapter VII). However, the activities of the CEBs are not always produced from the grass-roots levels but often follow a process of construction of knowledge similar to that of the 'traditional' hierarchical Church⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ Moreover, it has been pointed out that the political dimension of the CEBs is confined to the symbolic and ritual domains, and that their political role is contained within the local necessity of mediation between popular demands and State institutions. Once the mediation with the institutions ceases,

'New' and 'traditional' Church tendencies are represented as discordant by the clergy of the Anunciación and by lay *promotores*, but they are experienced as complementary by some of the parishioners. This incompatibility points to a struggle for symbolic capital between Jesuits and diocesan priests and the believers closely associated with them. Moreover, it shows how clerical agents and lay leaders use a style of 'essentialising' religious tendencies, fixing them in categories that become subtly 'unquestionable' to the believers at the base. Believers instead tend - to a greater or lesser extent - to combine these different tendencies. The issue of essentialisation is important in the CEBs' creation of a 'popular subject' and therefore of the *pueblo* as a subject.

Therefore, I agree with the Levine (1993) about the positive impact the CEBs have on the self-perception of the base as constituted by agents who are actively involved in shaping their selves and their communal identity through the practice of 'being the new Church'. Levine argues that the experience of the CEBs as grass-root organisations induces changes in popular religion and culture, from 'passive resignation, dependence, fatalism and powerlessness, to equality, and activism', which may have an effect on 'political change of major proportion' (Levine 1993: 216). Nonetheless, the Polanco case differs from Levine's positive evaluation of CEB activities because it points to the necessity of looking more closely at the formation of the '*pueblo*' as used in the language of the CEBs, at resistances which take place within the CEBs themselves, and at the negotiation of power and knowledge which occurs between lay and clerical members.

- ^a...Cuando crecía en la Iglesia nos contaban la historia de la creación del mundo, pero ahora nos la explican de forma diferente. Adán y Eva, hechos de barro, no es literal es simbólico, Padre Saravia nos dice que son un estado de conciencia.
- ^b.No comprendo nada..es demasiado para mí..nosotros somos gente simple...no alcanzamos a comprender.
- ^c.Los de la Iglesia tradicional quieren *conocer a Dios*, pero esto no se puede, solo se puede *encontrarlo* en el *servicio* para los demás.
- ^d.El Jesuita tiende a mandar..no tiene el lenguaje del pueblo, no sabe llegar al corazón de la gente..hay que darle a la gente lo que la gente pide no lo que uno quiere.
- ^e.Los Jesuitas no dejan crecer a la gente, este es el problema. Ellos dicen de ir hasta donde ellos quieren y que las otras cosas no están bien y te lo dicen razonando, filosóficamente, por esto y el otro..así que te convencen. Los Jesuitas te dicen que eres valioso pero faltas de experiencia y que necesitas crecer, entonces a la gente no se le da su importancia de ser y se siente frustrada. Ellos ya saben lo que quieren hacer y no preguntan a la gente...
- ^f.A los Jesuitas no les gustaba que la 'periferia' estuviese trabajando más que Polanco, nos ignoraban, ellos querían que Polanco resaltara mucho. El Padre Jesuita decidía lo que se debía hacer y quien lo iba a hacer. Polanco quería utilizar nuestro trabajo, pero yo no me quise dejar mangonear, y es importante que te tomen en cuenta tu y tu trabajo...
- ^g.El problema de los Jesuitas es que para ellos la fe es compromiso político. La política es parte de la vida, pero la vida no es política, es algo más...
- ^h.El padre se puso al lado de los guamíleres, los campesinos más pobres que siembran con azadones en el cerro ..así yo descubrí que había que estar al lado del mas pobre.
- ⁱ.Desde pequeño descubrí que la vida del sacerdote podía ser más encauzada hacia el pueblo...mi pueblo tenía muchas carencias, faltaban muchos servicios, era como un pueblo abandonado.
- ^j.No hay que apegarse a la ley pero al espíritu de la ley, como hacia Jesús, que la ley sea al servicio de la persona y no la persona a la ley.
- ^k.La verdadera CEB no es el grupo que se encuentra en la comunidad [in the spatial sense], aquí esta dividido en siete zonas, serían siete Comunidades...toda la vida de la Iglesia es en la Comunidad, allí esta la oración, allí están los sacramentos, el espíritu misionero, el espíritu profético, el servicio social...es como una semilla donde está todo en pequeñito,

entonces es como toda la Iglesia que está en las Comunidades de Base.

^l.Pero todos los otros movimientos tienen un modelo de Iglesia, la Iglesia de antes del Vaticano II, el modelo tradicionalista, triunfalista, individualista. Todos traen la Iglesia antigua...el nuevo modelo es la nueva Iglesia, la Iglesia de los pobres, la Iglesia misionera, la Iglesia comunidad.

^m.La necesidad de traer algo de trascendente porque la vida es breve, y de tener un proyecto duradero en la vida ..y la necesidad de estar donde la gente lo necesita a uno.

ⁿ.Toda la gente trabajaba en el templo, todo el pueblo se daba en el trabajo con gusto y alegría. Tú sabes que la gente lo expresa en una actitud de darse si algo le cae bien..si tienen cariño al templo, que es el fruto de su vida, Dios los va a oír por haber dado parte de sus vida.

^o.Es como tener una parroquia dentro de otra parroquia, es como tener cabezas distintas.

^p.Tiene que irse uno al paso, [Padre Nemo] no se da cuenta de cómo es la gente, la gente es de otro lado, *es sencilla*, la gente qué va a saber de Nicaragua. La gente tiene su problema con sus hijos que se drogan... *su problema es en el cotidiano*, tiene apenas cabeza para eso, para subsistir con estos problemas, no hacerle problemáticas de aquella o de otra parte...así que pueden vivir tranquilos, a gusto.

^q.Nosotros [the priests] somos los culpables para traer la gente con distintas mentalidades..a ellos [CEBs] les preocupa demasiado lo de aquí y a nosotros nos dicen que nos preocupa demasiado lo de allá.

^r.Qué pueden hacer ellos para que no haya tanta drogadicción, yo digo, no tanto quitar la lacra social pero quitar mi lacra personal,yo como vecino, en que estoy fallando?...Ellos dicen que hacen, pero no hacen nada.

^s...En la CEBs quieren que se hable de liberación, de cambio de estructura, pero no tienen en consideración lo de la familia, lo de la persona. Algunos vienen a las reuniones y mandan todo a la fregada, pero la arriegan. El problema es que en la comunidades se habla muy poco de la familia y mucha gente en las comunidades tiene problemas familiares muy fuertes. Padre Nemo piensa que el Movimiento Familiar Cristiano ha surgido de la derecha de la Iglesia y que está en contradicción con las CEBs, pero muchos en la parroquia no piensan así.

^t.El adorador nocturno pide a Dios perdone sus propios pecados, procura satisfacerlo por los que no le piden perdónpara todos sin excepción, pide por los pecados nacionales y del mundo entero.

^u.El cuerpo es un forro, tenemos un corazón,un corazón que no es el corazón que los gusanos se van a comer, es el alma; todo esto [indicating all the body] está impregnado del alma.

^v.El mensaje de la Adoración Nocturna es muy diferente; la Adoración Nocturna es una acción que siempre había conocido pero nunca había practicado. Yo le digo al padre Rodolfo que me dá vergüenza descubrir la Adoración a los sesenta anos, pero lo hago con entusiasmo y esto lo tiene en cuenta Dios. La Adoración Nocturna es estar con papá Dios en coloquio y dedicarle algunas horas, en la CEBs es más el actuar. En la Adoración Nocturna te canalizan de una forma, en la CEBs de otra.

CHAPTER IV: HEALING/CURING PLURALISM: 'MEDICINA
POPULAR' AND 'MEDICINA ALTERNATIVA'

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter, examining Catholic religious identity in Polanco, has argued that the tension between the 'new' and 'traditional' Churches is emphasized by those **promotores** of groups who have been closely affiliated to different priests in the parishes, rather than by the members at the base of the groups. This chapter, focusing on specific non-allopathic medical practices, raises parallel issues about the relations between, and the different aetiologies held by, 'experts', practitioners, and patients .

The first part of the chapter explores different aetiologies, and the related allocation of responsibility and blame to diverse agents in different contexts. These contexts are constituted by a group of **medicina popular**, developed in the work of the CEBs in the parish of the Anunciación, by a few people from the 'traditional' Church and a local **curandero**. The second part of the chapter argues that homoeopathy is practised in an allopathic way and that homoeopaths stress the scientific insights of homoeopathy, while the patients focus on faith/trust in the remedy and in the giver of the remedy.

Differences between aetiologies are emphasized by those who possess a special knowledge about curing or healing, such as the **promotores** of the group of **medicina popular**, the **curandero** and the majority of homoeopaths who practice in Polanco. The **promotores** of the **medicina popular** group emphasize the social nature of diseases, arguing that they are caused by the structure of society and the exploitation of the poor by the rich. The **curandero**, on the other hand, emphasizes that disease is caused by personal sin committed either by the ill person, or by those who may have cast a spell upon him/her. The homoeopaths argue that their cure is scientific and, therefore does not entail religious belief.

These various agents become representatives and mediators of knowledge for the members of the group and/or patients. But

coexistence of different non-allopathic medical systems and allopathy show that people perceive differences in terms of the methods and styles of curing rather than in terms of aetiological systems¹. The style of curing often consists of an incorporation of new, allopathic and homoeopathic elements into traditional household remedies (Logan 1988a). People use different curing strategies but distinguish their aetiologies only at the time of treatment, and then regardless of the view of the practitioners (Mahar Higgins 1975).

Both homoeopaths and the *medicina popular* group see themselves as practising 'alternative' medicine, a term which embraces diverse aetiological views. In Polanco 'alternative' medicines develop within a 'metamedical' framework of thought (Worsley 1982:315) and practices of a religious and social character. Different aetiologies refer to distinct attitudes towards the interaction of human and non-human agencies, such as health institutions, government, God and evil. The meanings attached to the term 'alternative' vary according to the interpreting agents, such as the *promotores*, the members of the group, the homoeopaths and their patients.

¹ Patients are active agents in a 'quest for therapy' (Janzen 1978), choosing between different practitioners and/or therapies rather than between 'traditional' and 'modern' medical systems, which may not be conceptualized as opposed but are often combined in the curing process (Stoner 1986:46).

4.2. INSTITUTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CARE

This section briefly describes the way in which State health care is structured in Mexico and its deficiencies. I argue that the quality of the service has decreased due to cuts in national funding. A number of potential alternatives to the National Health Insurance system available to people in Polanco are discussed.

The National Health Service in Mexico has two major branches: the IMSS (Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social), created in 1944 for people employed by the State, and the ISSSTE (Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado) created in 1960. There are other government-based institutions which provide health care for those who are not covered by these social security systems, such as the SSA (Secretaría de Salubridad y Asistencia). However this is only a 'nominal health service' (Ward 1986:130), given that its budget is extremely low in relation to the size of population it has to cover. In Polanco, those who are entitled to Social Security (mainly factory workers) register under the IMSS. A minority who work for the state, mainly employed in schools or as policemen, are covered by ISSSTE, the rest - the majority - come under the practically 'non-existent' coverage of the SSA.

The focus of IMSS action has been primarily on cure rather than the prevention of illness. Accidents at work, maternity, family planning and invalidity are the main focus of its activity rather than health education, especially among the poorest classes. At the base of IMSS and SSA policies (in the latter case more nominally than in practice) there is a formal interest in social issues. In the 'Plan Nacional de Desarrollo' (1974), there was an area, the 'Programa de Fomento a la Salud' (Program to encourage health), under which prevention and attention to family and community care targeted social health as a determinant component of personal health:

In reality the premise that health is the cause and effect of development (the fair distribution of wealth) becomes an affirmation, because there is no healthy population without development and this does not take place if the distribution of wealth

is unfair and there are poor conditions of health.
(My translation) (Soberón 1988:240).

This 'pathology of poverty' reveals a 'modernist' view of society, as technological and economic growth is believed to be a precondition for social health improvement. In practice, the National Health Plan never succeeded for lack of substantial resources, and it became a governmental, populist proposal which was never converted into applicable normative strategies (Ward 1986:117). During the 1980s, the situation did not change. Since 1980-1981, there have been major cuts in the national health care budget² with obvious repercussions upon the quality of the service.

The decreasing quality of the public health service parallels a devaluation of the figure of the doctor in such a structure. Working in a public institution used to be regarded as superior to working in the private health system, but the situation has now radically changed. Academic training for doctors is oriented towards North American models of efficiency, high technology and the 'objectification' of the patient: elements which develop medical practice in a social vacuum of human interaction, and shape it into an 'international' medical language (Loyoza 1990). However, the social and structural conditions in which doctors operate create a reality which is often quite different from these models.

In the case of the IMSS Unit #46 that many in Polanco attend, there is a chronic lack of material and human resources. I have been told that there are month-long waiting lists for specialized visits, and long queues for drop-in first aid consultancies are not exceptional. Under these conditions, doctors in the hospitals have access to a limited variety of medicaments and often prescribe the same remedies for different diseases, knowing that the remedy will only partially fight the symptoms.

² In the decade of the 1980s, the government budgets for IMSS, ISSSTE, SSA, were reduced by 40%, 61%, 50% respectively (Barry 1992: 236).

The wish 'de tener el Seguro' (to be under an IMSS scheme) is strong in Polanco. The **Seguro** gives people a certain confidence facing the insecurities of daily life, but covers only the person working under a contract (and a limited number of his/her nuclear family), and once obtained, it is not used if there are alternatives available. In Polanco, people refer themselves to IMSS under four major conditions: maternity, surgery, accident at work, and specialized consultations. Their judgement upon the IMSS service varies, and depends on whether or not they have been assigned a good doctor³.

In Polanco, there is a general perception that the service given by the IMSS and the SSA is decreasing in quality for two main reasons. Firstly the relationship between patient and doctor is described as lacking in humanity. Patients are often treated as if they were dull and unable to understand what is happening to them. They are often made to feel poor and stupid by the medical staff, as if ignorance and poverty were the causes of their diseases. Moreover, patients are increasingly aware that they are not treated for their specific symptoms, but are prescribed general remedies which cover a wide range of diseases. Soledad - one of the former **promotores** of the group of **medicinal popular**⁴ - gives a sharp judgement upon the medical profession:

The doctors are enabled to take advantage of the people, the poor...they study to become rich through the pain of people...what we do in the **grupo de salud** is directed towards those who have not studied, those like us, so that they can learn with what they have^a.

Secondly, patients are becoming more aware that after being treated for something, they frequently develop other symptoms. For this reason allopathic doctors are often called **matasanos** (lit. killers of the healthy). As a result, criticisms of the

³ An unsatisfactory relation with doctors is also due to lack of continuity in the relationship: a patient is not guaranteed consultation with the same doctor on different visits to the same hospital.

⁴ See chapter VI for a detailed discussion of her case.

seguro social are related to decreasing faith in the pragmatic results of allopathic practice.

However, many people in Polanco are not covered by the IMSS scheme: for instance, women who work as maids in private houses or men who work on building sites as daily **peones**. People who have no **seguro social** have a number of different options. If they have a reasonable income, or find themselves in circumstances of extreme urgency, they attend private allopathic doctors who practise in Polanco (or in near-by **colonias**). Although controversial judgements are made about such doctors, they appear to be kinder in their treatment than those practising in the IMSS. However, their primary concern is often with money. So experiences with some of these allopathic doctors may be negative⁵.

Many in Polanco cannot afford to pay for a private consultancy with an allopathic doctor (prices vary between 30,000 and 50,000 pesos plus medicines)⁶ especially, when there is little guarantee of long term amelioration. It is common for them to go directly to the pharmacy and buy whatever they or the shopkeeper think is effective for their symptoms. The use of over-the-counter drugs, which represents a big percentage of people's treatment, is still understudied (Logan 1988a). Buying drugs in pharmacies (which sell medicines in small amounts), with the advice of the pharmacist is not only cheaper, but is also similar to 'a traditional system of self-

⁵ An example is the case of Don Domingo (see chapter II), a diabetic patient without **seguro** who was treated by a doctor in Polanco. Don Domingo had a severe pain in one leg and was promised recovery through a series of very expensive injections. After a couple of weeks, I brought him to hospital in very great pain (in the intervening period, through the help of a **compadre**, the family had been able to enrol him under an IMSS scheme). He was diagnosed as having gangrene in his leg and it seemed highly likely that his leg would have to be amputated. The Polanco doctor's cure, which was supposed to make him better, was revealed to have been just a series of morphine injections to ease the pain.

⁶ In Mexico the minimum wage per day is extremely low in relation to the cost of living. At the beginning of 1992 it was less than 12,000 pesos (less than four dollars) for at least eight hours work (Barry 1992).

treatment, that once included only household remedies' (Logan 1988a:115). However, the fact that many pharmacists lack training, and that people reuse the same remedies for similar symptoms, sometimes leads to a misuse of allopathic medicine, with adverse consequences. Over-the-counter drugs are often integrated with **remedios caseros** (home made remedies - normally based on herbs) as people use different types of remedies at different stages of the disease.

A third possibility is, then, to turn to homoeopathy, **remedios caseros**, **hierberos**, **sobadores** (body manipulators) and, in case of chronic illnesses, to **curanderos**. All of these practices cost less than recurrent visits to allopathic doctors (with the exception of some homoeopathic consultancies, although their fees include the price of the remedies). Notions of responsibility in the generation of diseases and of the causality of illness - related to some forms of these latter options - are elaborated in the rest of the chapter.

4.3. THE EXPERIENCE OF MEDICINA POPULAR IN POLANCO

This section focuses on the experience of the **Vidasana** group, a group promoting **medicina popular** in the parish of the Anunciación. This group was formed from the CEBs experience at the end of 1990. Some of the members of the group participate in the meetings of the CEBs, but others are neither involved in such groups, nor in other parish activities. I will analyze the notions of healing expressed both by the **promotores** and by women who participate in the group. The **promotores** stress the social causes of diseases. They see the *causae efficiens* and *finalis* of the **medicina popular**⁷ as located in the structure of relations between social classes and, therefore, in the sinful actions of those wealthy and powerful people who exploit the

⁷ I use Dethlefsen's analysis of Aristotelian categories of causality. Aristotle distinguishes four types of causes: the *causa efficiens*, the motive power which induces disease; the *causa materialis*, the material and physical cause; the *causa formalis*, which shapes the result; and the *causa finalis*, the end-cause which is related to the perceived aim (Dethlefsen 1984).

poor. Different members of the Vidasana group expressed different emphases in the process of illness and healing, and stressed increased self-worth in dealing with everyday health-care issues. Before discussing the development of the group, I shall briefly discuss in which ways *medicina popular* is or is not a form of 'alternative' medicine.

4.3.1. MEDICINA POPULAR AS MEDICINA ALTERNATIVA

Since the beginning of the 1970s, there has been a considerable increase in the mass use of alternative therapies in Mexico. There are two distinct trends. The first is the interest on the part of the well-educated population in the use of natural diets and holistic medicines. In this case, 'medicina alternativa' has been a privilege of a relatively small, but increasing part of the population (Loyoza 1990). The second trend is identifiable with those large underprivileged strata of society who, for different reasons, cannot, or prefer not to, rely on allopathic cures. This second trend has been interpreted as a counter-hegemonic discourse to the allopathic system of health care, hence a form of class resistance (Mendez 1984).

Medicina popular is defined as 'medicina alternativa' by the actors involved in the *proceso de salud* (health process) in Polanco. Homoeopaths also describe homoeopathy as an alternative medicine, though often in the sense of being 'alternative' to allopathy (see below). The case of Polanco shows that the semantic field of 'alternative medicine' needs to be explored in different contexts.

The root of 'alternative medicine' is in vitalism (Inglis 1979), which locates illness in the imbalance of energy fields (e.g. at psychological and/or spiritual levels) that are then manifest in the physical symptoms⁸. The positive side of

⁸ The body, rather than being conceived as a recipient of external agents (medicaments) is considered to have potentially a fundamental self-healing power (Inglis 1979: 201). Alternative medicine aims to release those blockages which prevent such healing. However, because this field of practice is constituted by a great diversity of practices (which do not rest on a

illness is that it can be a means of becoming aware of disharmony in the physical body, and therefore of forces which are latent in oneself (Dethlefsen 1983: 42). It differs from allopathic medicine in that the attitude of alternative medicine is to learn about and acknowledge this imbalance rather than to fight the illness. Therefore, the focus is on symptoms as expressions of the person rather than symptoms in conflict with the person. Healing can imply a sharing between the healer and the healed, a compassion (in the sense of *shared pathos*). Often the healing rests on a change of consciousness both in the healer and in the healed (Dethlefsen 1985). Allopathy, instead, works through the nature of the medicine, regardless of the relation between the healed and the healer and/or the maker of the medicine.⁹

Medicina popular in Polanco has some of these characteristics, but is also a combination of different paradigms. It is an umbrella term which stands for the practice of various kind of alternative medicine: acupuncture, 'digitopuncture' (using pressure points), reflexology, herbal remedies, massage..., the aims of which are to make people aware of their reality and to enable them to practice a form of self- help:

The intent is to form a wide, self-sufficient and independent organisation which, besides preventing and curing illness, acts for the defence of the rights of the marginal classes through mobilizing the communities to claim basic services and fight for better conditions of life [my translation] (Palomar Vereá 1988:260).

Medicina popular in Mexico has developed through two channels. During the mid-1970s, the WHO ran a programme to develop traditional medicine in Mexico. Its aim was to develop practical methods of self-help on the model of the 'bare foot

theoretical universal paradigm, as it is presumed of allopathic technological medicine (Grossinger 1980:13)), a general definition of its 'basic principles' is rather arbitrary.

⁹ General references to allopathic system are made with a realisation that theoretical universal assumptions in their applications may embrace different, and sometimes conflicting practices (Gaines and Hahn 1985).

doctors' in China¹⁰. This experience was coordinated by research from IMEPLAM (Instituto Mexicano para el Estudio de Plantas Medicinales) and later by the MTH (Unidad de Investigación en Medicina Tradicional y Herbolaria del Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social) (Loyoza 1991:274, 282). Illich's work on iatrogenic diseases was also an important stimulus to the promotion of 'traditional' medicine at grass-root levels in Mexico as an alternative to the use of allopathic remedies (Beltrán 1986:12) .

Secondly, **medicina popular** spread through networks which overlapped with the CEBs¹¹. The influence of Freire's work on education and consciousness-raising among the poor, and of different works on Marxist medical sociology¹² have become the ideological basis on which **medicina popular** has developed as a grass-roots movement. For Freire, education as a process of raising consciousness should develop critical thinking (Schutte 1993:143). In the case of **medicina popular**, critical thinking would help to break ties of domination between doctors and

¹⁰ During the Chinese Revolution, knowledgeable and educated people became involved in organizing forms of primary community health care. Those people, called 'barefoot' doctors, combined acupuncture and home-made remedies, and only referred patients to western doctors if their own primary intervention had not succeeded (Worsley 1982:340). The Chinese traditional medical system has been handed down mainly through written texts and has maintained a certain unity, while the Mexican medical system has been transmitted orally, and is more heterogeneous and fragmented (Lozoya 1991). This is one of the main reasons why the organization of a national plan of self-help training groups, on the model of 'barefoot' doctors', has been difficult to achieve in Mexico.

¹¹ In Mexico the WHO's program of **medicina popular** was hampered rather than facilitated by governmental policy. This is the reason why later efforts have been promoted by universities and religious groups (as in the case of Polanco), outside ministerial health planning, and are, therefore, regarded as a form of resistance to the institutionalized order (Loyoza 1990, Beltrán 1986).

¹² I refer to those sociological studies based on historical materialist analysis which use 'abstract categories' located in particular historical processes instead of 'empirical, traditional epidemiology' to explain the relationship between conditions of health and sickness (Rojas Soriano 1983:19).

patients through what Freire sees as a communion of interests between leader/**promotores** and members of the group. Though, in practice, this is not always the case because of differences between **promotores** and local systems of knowledge (Fajardo 1991:8).

The principles on which **medicina popular** is based can be traced to wider conflict and dependency theory paradigms (Gerhardt 1989, Fajardo 1991). Illness is related to the failure of society to allocate adequate social resources to tackling disease, which derives from an ideological inter-class conflict. The causality of illness is located in ideological conflicts, which themselves derive from capitalist relations of production. According to this argument, illnesses which are manifested in the biological body are triggered by the stressful/ conflictive condition of the social body¹³.

The next section describes the work of the group of **medicina popular** in Polanco; explores the aetiology which emerges from the group; and focuses on some of the differences which arise between members' and **promotores**' notions of causality and responsibility in the illness process.

4.3.2. THE VIDASANA GROUP

The Vidasana group was formed by people who were involved in the CEBs of the Anunciación. The group was constituted in January 1990 - meeting in the parish of the Anunciación. Until summer 1991 the organisation of the group was in the hands of Mauricio. Mauricio - helped by Soledad - worked for four years in close contact with Padre Nemo, before being discharged (with Soledad) from the parish (see chapter III). Sister Carlota firstly and later sisters Mónica and Elda helped Mauricio and Soledad in the organisation and promotion of the group. But at the beginning of 1991 the group split into two parts, because of accusations against the woman treasurer about mismanagement

¹³ Not only ideological class conflict, but also lifestyles and the practice of medical knowledge - which define the sick person - contribute to the genesis of the ill body (Gerhardt 1989:337).

of the common fund to which women gave one thousands pesos a week. The treasurer and a part of the group have been meeting in private houses supervised by Mercedes - an ex-sister who lived in the parish with padre Nemo. Conflicts have arisen between these two groups over the alleged unequal allocation of parish resources and of support given to them by Padre Nemo. Women in the two groups are critical, and gossip about each other. Two of the women I know, who participate in both groups, are not fully trusted by fellow-members of the Vidasana group. Since the 'expulsion' of Mauricio and Soledad from the parish's activities, Mercedes has taken up the coordination of the group which meets in the parish, but during her leadership membership of the group has shrunk.

Sixty women participated in the group at the time of its formation, but only a few men joined, and they eventually dropped out. Women, more than men, in Polanco are concerned with health issues, primarily because they are the ones involved in caring for the health of children. Although some men in the CEBs also have good knowledge of *remedios caseros*, they said that they did not have the time to attend the group's meetings (such as Alfonso, see chapter III). However, they did not feel comfortable being alone 'among many women' as they might have become the source of female gossip or might have generated mistrust among women-members' husbands (which is, in fact, what happened to Mauricio, the only male in the group). Apart from activities related to the Church there are few occasions in which married women can socialize openly with men.

The husbands of the group's members are often sceptical about the pragmatic results which can be achieved through membership of the group. But once they start to receive treatments from their wives (they are often used as 'guinea-pigs!'), they become more positive and less fussy about their wives' participation in the group.

The group of Vidasana has been part of a wider urban network in the process of development, which is made up of similar groups in five *colonias*: Atemajac, Santa Cecilia, La Peñita, Rancho Nuevo and Polanco. All the groups, to a

greater or lesser extent, were born out of the experience of the CEBs or were developed by **promotores** who were inclined to this type of evangelisation. However, all these groups have been trying to achieve a status of greater independence from direct parish influence.

In Polanco, by mid-1991, there were more or less thirty women involved in the group. The group set up a consultation service for a small fee in the parish of the Anunciación. However, some of the women did not want to take the responsibility of prescribing remedies for people outside their family and circle of friends, so only a restricted number offered consultations.

Vidasana was born, in the eyes of the lay and religious **promotores** - who are also **promotores** of the CEBs - with the long-term aim of increasing people's consciousness of their situation and of creating forms of medical self-help to counteract economic pressures in poor households. The idea of the **promotores** was to retrieve people's knowledge, rooted in their rural past, and to make the members proud of their roots: transforming these roots into a useful resource rather than seeing them as an element of 'backwardness' in an urban environment. On the first anniversary of the formation of the Vidasana group, Mauricio, together with the women, composed a **corrido** (hymn) that summarizes in a playful way some of the characteristics of the group:

I have very clearly in mind the twenty-fourth of
 January when,
 on a Wednesday, a group of female companions met.
 They became very aware of problems related to
 health,
 and studied with complete and total care.
 Seeing all the sicknesses [around them] they
 searched for solutions.
 Using medical plants, they found the cure.
 They analyzed the problems within the community,
 and together fought to change the reality.
 The **pueblo** needs to rejoice in health
 so that united together people work well.
 "Fly, fly little dove to reach the rose bush":
 awakening to life, the dove wants to thank it.
 With this I make a greeting singing this song;
 we are at your service at the temple of the
 Anunciación^b.

The Vidasana group attempts to overcome unsatisfactory power relations between patients and doctors through the de-professionalization and de-medicalization of health care. One of the policies of the group is that only symbolic honoraria can be asked for a given remedy. Those women who have taken personal (economic) advantage of the knowledge which is shared by the group are criticized. Power relations between the members pivot around access to the sharing of knowledge about the uses of plants and other self-help methods. Some women show veiled resistance to sharing what they know; those closer to the **promotores** in charge at any time have easier access to information as well as better access to provincial or regional meetings. Women in the group defined themselves as **viejas** (old) and **nuevas** (new) in relation to the length of their membership, their degree of knowledge, and their capacity to have assimilated the knowledge shared in the group.

In the first period of the life of the Vidasana group, Mauricio and Soledad stressed self-teaching. They were resistant to inviting 'expert' people to come and give talks to the group. They preferred to stimulate the women to share what they knew already, backing it up with written sources circulated between groups of **medicina popular** around the country, and photocopied within the group. The basic teaching in the group revolved around the use of herbs in **tintura** (tincture), **microdosis**, **placas** (metallic bars) to equilibrate energy, as well as massage techniques. Women learnt how to use herbs such as **ruda** (rue), **arnica**, **estafiáte** (larkspur), **sangre de grado** (physic nut bush) and to make them into alcoholic potions for the cure of menstrual pain, traumas, stomach pain and infections. Some basic teaching about nutrition was explored, especially in relation to vitamin properties, and inexpensive nutritious foods such as soya and gluten.

The way in which the group was coordinated by the sisters Mónica, Elda and later Mercedes differed from Mauricio's policy. A nurse came regularly to teach first aid; different 'experts' were called to give workshops about **auricopuntura**, acupuncture and relaxation. The most knowledgeable women were

invited to participate in a series of homoeopathic workshops in the north of the city. However, the material discussed was not shared by the **promotores** with the other women of the group. At the time when Mercedes was in charge of the group, some of the women of Vidasana felt they were not given enough support and that **promotores** 'se tienen el conocimiento para ellas' (kept the knowledge to themselves). Their complaints addressed **promotores**' preference towards the other group which had been meeting parallel to Vidasana since Mauricio ceased to be in charge. The original group spent entire weeks without touching the subjects of home-made herbal remedies, and some women were upset by this shift. De-professionalization of medical practice was high on the agenda, during both Mauricio's and Mercedes's periods as **promotores**, but with different emphases on de-medicalization. During Mauricio's time the group was oriented toward knowledge grounded in women's everyday practices, while during the subsequent promotion of the religious sisters the emphasis was more on the knowledge of experts which ordinary women ought to assimilate.

4.3.3. MEDICINA POPULAR AND THE SOCIAL NATURE OF ILLNESS

At the root of the process of the **medicina popular** lies an analysis of social reality. The idea that health is the product of social reality as well as being generated by psychological displacement is central. This presupposition is embedded in a cartoon slide show, which was shown during a regional meeting in Sayula (Colima) in May 1991, and later in Polanco, as well as in an exercise called the 'tree of life and death' which was carried out by sister Mónica in the Vidasana group.

The protagonists of the cartoons were cats and tigers and their story was a metaphor of society. The story referred to a mythical time when all cats lived together in cooperation, equality and good health, and nature satisfied all their needs. At that time health was in the hands of the people/cats, but with the rise of private property some cats were transformed into tigers and started to take control of society. With the

formation of the State, the latter openly took the side of the tigers, and people/cats became subjects of exploitation, beginning with their physical bodies. Imperialism brought increased working time for smaller wages, economic pressure on the land of cats and different forms of disease in adults and kittens. Moreover, some of the cats turn into tigers as they became false prophets. Nonetheless, the majority of cats were able to reestablish harmony, health and well-being through unity and solidarity between them. Mauricio and sister Mónica often referred to this allegory of the 'cats and the tigers'. Mauricio talked about the connection between good health and human rights. Abuse of the human rights of the *pueblo* is said to be the cause of a sick society.

While human rights are explicitly connected to the state of people's health, the *causa materialis* of illness is in conditions in the social environment where poor people live and work; the *causa efficiens* rests on the *nature* of the social relations between classes and nations. Thus bodily symptoms are interpreted as the outcome of social conditions, and illness is generated by modifications of social habits and deterioration in the conditions of life. Part of the material which was handed out to the group in Polanco and in the other regional and provincial meetings helps explain this point. On one occasion, the group discussed a leaflet about chest diseases. The title of a small leaflet about 'digitopuntura' (hand pressure points), distributed to the group by Mercedes was:

Useful [pressure] points for chest disease (due to poor living conditions and shortage of clothing).^c

The discussion evolved around the way in which it is possible to alleviate respiratory problems with such remedies as eucalyptus and cinnamon. Nonetheless, it was repeatedly stated that the humidity of houses in the rainy season, level of air contamination in the old industrial area of the city (right next to Polanco) and a diet lacking in fresh vegetables and fruits, were the 'real' causes of lung and throat infections. Consequently, women observed that the same conditions were not present in the better-off *colonias*. The discussion group was

then led by the *promotores* to see the *causa materialis* of illness in living conditions, and the *cause efficiens* in their inability to maintain basic conditions of living.

A similar approach to the idea of the social root of illness was explored by sister Mónica through the image of the trees of life and death¹⁴ (see Appendix B). Two empty trees were shown to the women as models for describing the types of diseases common in the *colonia*. The tree of life shows how integration of the tree is the basis of health. Wholeness is located in a sense of community, in class solidarity. The tree needs strong roots in order to develop 'healthy' leaves. The healing process depends upon a balanced relation between the different parts of society, which is metaphorically represented as a living body. The tree of death indicates that illness is generated by distortion of the structure of society, when a restricted group of people exploit the majority, generating a path of death.

In this exercise, Mónica asked the women to fill in the roots and the trunk with the economic and political reasons which generate both disease and health. Mónica suggested that illness was a limitation of personal and collective abilities, and that there are '*gente muerta que puede dar vida y gente viva que puede dar muerte*' [Dead people who can generate life and living people who can generate death]. So those who took advantage of the conditions of the poor were committing a sin not only towards people but towards life itself. At the time of the exercise, women in the group found it difficult to fill in the tree on their own, especially that part which represented the roots, so Mónica *helped* the women to make the 'structural' connection between their everyday lives and the wider structures of society. Women's opinions *had to fit* this overall explanation. At the end Mónica decided to collect the sheets and prepare a 'polished up' version which she

¹⁴ The tree representation is inspired by Freire's model of alphabetization and the raising of consciousness, and, before that, by Engels' analysis of working class conditions during the Industrial Revolution in England (Fajardo 1991).

distributed as a handout a couple of weeks later.

Women in the discussion identified the seed of death with medical drug-producers, who become rich at the expense of the underprivileged. They considered illness to be rooted in the selfish acquisition of superfluous goods, and in the envy between people that this process generates. But there was also resistance to such explanation masked under umbrella phrases - 'no alcanzo a comprender'; 'es muy difícil para mí'; (I am not good enough to understand...it is very difficult for me') which some of both *nuevas* and *viejas* women expressed.

Teresa, a *vieja* in the group, mentioned the case of a very poor family in her street, which had no proper toilet but used a hole in the courtyard. Teresa mentioned that the children of that family were often ill and that the community of the neighbours in the street unsuccessfully offered to help the family. Teresa blamed both parents for being lazy, because they did not look hard enough for work, and for wasting the money pooled by the neighbours. She pointed out that the illnesses of the children were caused by their parents, who were *tercos* (stubborn) and *flojos* (lazy)¹⁵. Sister Mónica, instead, ascribed the illness as due not to the parents' personal responsibility but to their economic conditions, which were the cause of their unhealthy life-style.

'Enfermedades de los nervios' (nerves) were the example in which the women of the group could most easily see a correlation between living-conditions and the development of diseases. People in Polanco talk about being sick because of *nervios* in different contexts. The word is an umbrella concept which can cover many physical symptoms: migraine, gastritis, ulcers. The causes of nervous sickness were discussed among

¹⁵ Tina also mentioned to me - outside the group- that she did not understand where to place *empacho* (which is an inability to digest food, a form of food- poisoning, which can result in diarrhoea, fever or vomiting) in the tree, and said that she was shy to bring up the issue in the group. Discrepancies of this type between the differing 'rationalities' of the *promotores* and the local people can be interpreted as a form of friction between 'external' and 'localized' knowledge (Fajardo 1991).

the women of the group in terms of bad eating habits produced by shortage of money, as a consequence of economic pressure upon the household management of the household economy: 'el dinero nunca alcanza para la quincena' (money doesn't last the fortnight [wages are often payed fortnightly]).

Biblical reflections were also used in the group to discuss themes related to the trees of life and death. Mónica brought an elaboration of the letter of Paul to the Philippians (4,15-24) to a group meeting. She developed the theme of the difference between 'el hombre viejo y el nuevo' (the old and the new man). The 'old man':

Takes too many medicines or *poisons himself* with tranquilliser and sleeping pills. He only hears what concerns *himself*, thinking about what he is deciding next. He is centred upon his unfulfilled ego ("what I said to him, what he said to me").. [her emphases]^d

The 'new man' instead:

Seeks help in overcoming his nervous tensions from his mental and spiritual energy...he is interested in himself in a different way. He does not relate the outside to *his own I*. He listens carefully and understands the feelings/reasons of others^e [her emphasis].

In chapter III I discussed how 'traditional' and 'new' become metaphors - in CEBs discourse - for constructing a notion of the past and of the present/future through an opposition between the individual and the collective. Disease, then, in CEB terms, arises when the collective is subordinated to the action of individuals.

The women of the group related the theme of the 'old' and 'new' man to their personal lives. Some of them recognized how easily they had slipped into drugs in the past and how often they had felt caught up in a downward spiral. The majority felt that el grupo de salud helped them to see that their problems were the problems of many other women in the colonia, and that illness was generated from a state of mind which could be changed by different behaviour. For Mónica, this reflection 'helped' the group to connect this structural analysis to their

personal experiences¹⁶. Mauricio also used Biblical references to argue that home made remedies were used in ancient times and that critical judgements of the figure of the doctor and of the achievement of the medical profession were already present in the Bible (Mark 5,26). The idea that illness can be caused by not adhering to God's plan leads to perceiving the act of curing as a social act¹⁷.

Three interconnected points can be drawn from the analysis of the causes of illness embedded in the thinking of the Vidasana group in Polanco. Firstly, recovery from illness is ultimately linked to the reorganisation of society and to human solidarity. Healing occurs through an increase of collective consciousness, the *causa finalis* thus being *structural change* in society. Secondly, the defence of life requires *engaging actively* to combat the causes of death. Preventive medicine is the defence of social justice as part of God's realm. Thirdly, the individual is considered to be the holder of individual responsibility in collective communal action which may create sin/disease; sin, which causes illness, arises from the actions of those who exploit others for their own selfish, individual needs and from the structure of society which enables them to do this.

4.3.4. HEALING AND SELF-WORTH

The notions of healing, and of consciousness and self-worth which emerge from the voices of some of the women of the group, are accented differently from the accounts of the

¹⁶ Mónica said to me that Biblical study in the group was meant to show the relationship between human guilt, sin, and lack of health, and that 'prevention' of illness is a form of respect for God's laws.

¹⁷ In a booklet used and distributed at the national level within the CEBs:
'Illness is a breaking of God's Law... [in the Old Testament] the appearance of poor and marginalized people in society was a clear sign that the alliance was broken and that the law of God was not respected...and the bad organisation of society was one of the causes that contributed most to people's lack of health' [my translation] (Mester 1991:13).

promotores. Women in the Vidasana group value their experience both because it increases their self-worth and because of its religious content. Women who have been involved actively in the CEBs formulate a connection between **medicina popular** and divine healing, while those who are not involved with the CEBs stress pragmatic results and the increased sense of self-worth which derives from practising what they have learnt.

In a meeting of the network of five groups in Guadalajara which took place in La Peñita, the participants were asked to describe the reasons for their participation, and the effects of their experience, in **medicina popular**. For the women of the Vidasana, (at that time coordinated by Mauricio and Soledad):

..es tener conciencia de lo que habemos perdido y hacer algo por los demás (it is to be conscious of what we have lost, and do something for others) (Doña Carmen)..servir a los demás y aprender a curarse (to serve others and learn to cure oneself)...es un mensaje dado con amor y fe lo más que uno pueda (it is a message given with the best love and faith we can)...hay que tener este conocimiento a el alcance de todos (this knowledge must be available to everybody) (Doña Mago)...es nuestra entrega a la sociedad como la de Dios al mundo (it is our offering to society like that of God to the world) (Marichiui)..que todos nosotros podemos dar consuelo y salud por medio de la naturaleza y el amor de Dios (that we all can give comfort and health through nature and the love of God) (Doña Marisol).

In the last (and third from last) sentence 'todos' suggests that not just one person but anybody can participate in the process of healing. Hence the relationship between patient and doctor is challenged, because the barrier between the one who knows and the one who does not is fluid. The power of healing, then, is intrinsic to our state of being human, once we accept to become active agents through the love of God.

Through the practice of **medicina popular** women can give 'consuelo y salud': the remedy is a means through which a part of them can be communicated to those who are in need. What is shared is a common pathos and, through this sharing, healing takes place. 'Dar consuelo y salud' is also a self-healing process, because the experience of the group of Vidasana is meant to be a service to society as a fundamental component of

being Catholic, so that the healing process becomes part of the process of the redemption of the soul. The connection between *medicina popular* and religious experience is through the love of God: 'Es un mensaje dado con amor y fe lo más que uno pueda...por medio de la naturaleza y del amor de Dios': the power of healing comes from nature and the love of God. For Doña Mago and Doña Marisol, healing implies a wider process at physical, emotional and spiritual levels.

Doña Mago, a lively married women in her middle forties, a *vieja*, and one of the most knowledgable women of the group described her experience of *medicina popular* in these terms:

Up to now I have had positive and negative experiences. For instance, I have placed small metal bars (*placas*), but frequently [the outcome] depends on the mental state of the person. You can place many *placas* but they do not have any effect if the person does not have *consciousness* of herself or if she does not have *faith/trust* (*confianza*). If, with the faith you have, you are lazy, you should realize your contradictions [my emphasis].

In her words, there is a recognition that God heals, and that those who learn have the responsibility to apply the teaching without laziness. Mago talks about a relation between sickness and healing. Healing cannot take place if there is a lack of *personal* consciousness and faith both in the healer and in the healed. Mago feels she has a responsibility to use the knowledge she has that she has learnt in the group. Moreover, in order to be cured, for her it is necessary to have trust and faith in the treatment and in the person who gives it. Mago then is aware that it is not just the remedy that cures, but the process involved in the giving and the taking of the treatment, and that these are central characteristics which actually differentiate *medicina del seguro* from *medicina popular*. While for the *promotores* the consciousness which develops out of the experience of illness tends to be more about social relations and solidarity, for some women in the group the focus is more on healing and faith.

Nonetheless if some of the women in the group represent their experience as a healing process, others believe in

natural remedies, although without stressing the healing and the religious aspects involved. Antonia¹⁸, a young woman who works in the *tianguis*, has a good knowledge of plants and remedies. Her answers to my questions on the healing power of God were 'sceptical'. She was not bothered as to whether it was God or some other forces beyond the treatment, but considered that natural remedies *work* in many cases. She *felt good* that she was able to give small remedies and advice on nutrition to her family and friends and, therefore, to reduce their expenses in relieving common illnesses. Some of the remedies she uses are those that her mother recalls from the *rancho*. Antonia offers her advice to neighbours, but she says that some women lack the patience to use natural remedies. When they cannot see positive results from using them, it is because they are lazy and do not follow the *posology* that she gives to them correctly.

In the case of Antonia, but also for other women who have participated in the group, the experience of the *Vidasana* group has increased their sense of self-worth. It represents an opportunity for women to act together and to use and increase such skills as reading and writing. These are some of the aims that the *promotores* want to achieve. Women partly assimilate the ideological message of the 'social nature' of illness (or 'resist' it through stressing their ignorance and inability to learn such concepts), but, once out of the group, they can become 'experts' and knowledgeable about remedies *vis-à-vis* their close community. In this sense - in different degrees - they begin to feel useful and empowered to deal with health issues in everyday practice.

¹⁸ I discuss her and her mother's case in chapter VI.

4.4. DISEASE AND INDIVIDUAL SIN

The case of the **medicina popular** group reveals an area of the aetiology of illness which allocates blame and responsibility to the selfish actions of certain classes and to the structure of society which allows these actions to take place. But other forms of aetiology, which revolve similarly around notions of sin, are also present in Polanco. These see endogenous causes in the emotional state of the person or as generated by the evil eye (Foster 1978). In the latter case, the sins of another may become the cause of one's own disease. These explanations identify the *causa efficiens* of illness in personal sin and in resistance to God's will - rooted in what people in the CEBs call 'temor de Dios' (fear of God). This interpretation may also be given by those who are involved in groups of the 'traditional' church, while this aetiology, plus the idea of evil eye, appear in the practice of the local **curandero**.

Urban **curanderismo** seems to be more diversified and to use more impersonal practices than rural **curanderismo** (Press 1971). However, there is no agreement whether **curanderismo** is increasing or decreasing among urban population. Studies carried out among the Hispanic population in urban settlements in the southern United States variously show either that the importance of the **curandero's** practice is decreasing (Edgerton 1970), or that **curanderos** are still widely consulted especially for more serious and chronic cases (Trotter 1980), and that their practice is changing, while maintaining the holistic (mind/body) approach to treatment (Trotter 1980:476). Press's analysis - influenced by an evolutionary Redfieldian model - argues that the 'urban **curanderismo** process' is a socio-cultural phenomena through which differences in styles of consultation of therapy are adapted to the increasingly diversified needs of urban population (Press 1971:73). The work of the **curandero** Don Eduardo in Polanco can be understood within the context of urban conditions of life, where allopathic medicine is often too expensive, ineffective or limited and where connections between illness and sin are still

widely believed to be causes of chronic diseases or accidents.

Don Eduardo (who practises in the **calle cuarentaidos**) is not well thought of by the Vidasana group. The women of the Vidasana group look on his work with scepticism, and the **promotores** argue that his healing does not cure, but some people still have faith in it. Don Eduardo was first mentioned to me by two women of the Vidasana group, MariChiui and Mago, who live in the same street as him. Both were reluctant to give me information about the **curandero** and his activities:

I do not know what Don Eduardo does, but many people go to him...I have never gone, his house looks very ugly. I believe that he has a lot of money, but he does not want to let it be seen, it is said that he lives in another neighbourhood in a very nice house with another woman.. (MariChiui)⁶

Don Eduardo is a big man, probably in his middle fifties, who seems to live with his large family in a simple and 'rural' type of house in Polanco. He keeps animals in his courtyard¹⁹, and there is always a long queue of people waiting for his or one of his assistant's **limpias** (see below). The patients are seen in a small windowless room behind a worn out curtain. There is no privacy during the healing session because new patients are always coming in, to undergo **limpias** with him or his assistant. There is a large altar in one corner of the room which is covered with lighted candles and photographs. On the top of the altar is an image of the divine providence (in the form of the third eye), embellished with red and white flowers, and on the wall a long series of woeful pictures of the passion of Christ. Before undertaking the first **limpia**, the person has a short session with Don Eduardo. In the session Don Eduardo talks to the patient about his/her weakened state, pain and depression²⁰. Don Eduardo comments

¹⁹ The courtyard/waiting room is reminiscent of a rural house in the **rancho**. MariChiui pointed out that it was kept by him as such to make people think that the traditions of the **pueblo/rancho** were maintained there.

²⁰ Don Eduardo often used conversation and the 'look' of the patient, rather than divination or examination of part of the patient's body, in his diagnostic practice (Kroeger 1988: 27).

that people are in great pain because they are distant from God and the Virgin. The patient, in a sense, is 'made aware' of his/her state, which is due to his soul's weakness in resisting evil. Don Eduardo is a type of 'spiritualist' healer, because he claims to be a channel through which divine messages are manifested (Trotter 1980: 453).

Then the actual *limpia* takes place²¹. At the end patients are told to pray to God and the Virgin because the cause of their illness is their distance from God. Moreover they are warned not to expose themselves to envy. The idea is that illness is due to misplacement. People and things must be in the place which corresponds to them. Disease can be 'caught' outside one's own house, if one is exposed to other people's scrutiny. Women, especially, should stay at home, because they catch diseases more easily if they expose themselves to public places. At the end of the session with Don Eduardo and his assistants, people leave a donation according to their means.

Don Eduardo's clientele is very heterogeneous in social and economic status, but one experience seems common: other remedies have been unfruitful. Many patients come regularly for a wide range of different symptoms, which may vary from physical problems to the appearance of spirits in the houses of relatives. Often those who have been diagnosed as incurable, or cannot afford an expensive medical cure turn to Don Eduardo. In other cases patients have been said not to be sick at all by allopathic doctors²². Don Eduardo advises his patients first

²¹ The *limpia* does not normally last more than a couple of minutes. Perfumed water is sprinkled on the body of the patient, and his/her outline is traced with a big knife and a wooden bar. Then the patient receives a small pot of water which has been kept near the altar and drinks it. At the end, the person is recommended to bathe for three days at lunch-time with cold water, and wrap him or herself up with a dry towel for a couple of minutes.

²² For example, a young woman complained that doctors could not find anything wrong with her, but that she had such severe migraine and anxiety that sometimes she could not leave her bed. As a consequence, she lost her job and her fiancé, and things became worse and worse in her life. Don Eduardo was the

to try all the other medicines: 'Cuando uno quiere santo no puede',²³ but once people come to see him they must 'remeterse a la voluntad de Dios, no venir aquí para ver' (they must submit themselves to God's will, not come here just to see). He affirms that the best medicine is the will of God, and that we are now living in a very difficult period because people go against the laws of God. Transgressing the laws of God results in sickness in two ways. Firstly, a person becomes sick because he acts wrongly or sinfully. Secondly, he/she may become sick because another person has invoked the Devil. The idea that disease can be put into the person by an evil agency is central:

People get ill because of other people's actions and misbehaviour. When we dislike somebody we can get ill...if we have a quarrel with someone he says that he will not forget it. In this way people invoke the Devil^h. (Don Eduardo)

Therefore, the sick person carries a range of problems and pain within himself, related to his or to another person's individual sin. The *causa efficiens* of illness is the existence of evil in humans and the *causa finalis* is reconciliation and rapprochement with God, as a form of redemption from sin. In fact, Don Eduardo argues that God and the Virgin heal through him, he himself is not the source of healing. He compares his life before and after his conversion (after which he became a channel of God) as two very distinct lives: the first a life of vice and scepticism towards God; the second a life of service.

A similar connection between illness and sin is also made in 'traditional' religion. Doña Estrella and Don Luís (see chapter III) shared the idea that illnesses are often a punishment from God and that pain and sickness also offer the

last chance for her pain to be recognised and remedied. When she came out from the *limpia*, she looked 'relieved' because Don Enrique told her that there was something wrong and that she had to come back to see him regularly for a period of time.

²³ Literally it translates 'when one wants the saint can't' meaning that it is not possible to do something with a person which is not in tune with his/her will.

possibility of an individual soul's redemption. However they consider *curanderos* as *hechiceros* (wizards) and they are strongly against them as healers: 'los que invocan a las Virgen y los santos pero hacen hecisos con el diablo' (Don Luís) (those who call upon the Virgin and Saints, but cast spells with the Devil). What they criticize in Don Eduardo's practice is not the idea of the existence of evil as a cause of diseases, but that some people see *curanderos* as capable of releasing people from sin - as priests do - and therefore believe they can be released from evil and pain without going through church absolution²⁴.

Estrella, in a meeting of the MFC, inferred that illnesses and accidents make us aware of having gone against God's will. She explained that on a Saturday night she was supposed to finish off some work for Caritas in the temple, but she was drawn more to go to the fiesta of some relatives with her husband. On the doorstep, she hurt her ankle badly and could not leave the house. She felt very depressed because the following day was the marriage of one of her beloved nephews. However, when she woke up the next day her ankle had 'miraculously' got better and she was able to go to the wedding Mass. Her interpretation was that the accident and the pain in her leg were a message from God about her misbehaviour. However, God is so just and loving that he has the power to heal the pain overnight, because she intended to attend a good cause the following day. Thus, for Estrella, illness can be an expression of disharmony between human and divine will. Her perception of the divine is related to the 'traditional' conception of fear of God ('temor de Dios'), of God as punisher, and she sees illness and recovery as a means for the redemption of personal sin and the sense of guilt.

For Doña Marisol and Doña Mago healing and recovery is related to 'tuning in' to the divine world too, but it also

²⁴ The *curandero* undermines the figure of the priest as a mediator between human and divine agency. The practice of the *curandero*, if accepted in the eyes of Estrella and Don Luís, would reduce the figure of the priest (the mediator of divine agency) to the level of a lay person.

implies the acquisition of a consciousness of the relation between oneself, nature and the world one happens to live in. Sickness is not a punishment or a recognition of personal sin, but a potential for awareness. For the **promotores** of the **grupo de salud**, such as Mauricio and Mónica, such awareness is particularly related to social relations, and responsibility for illness is blamed on those who create poverty and exploit people. For Don Eduardo and Estrella illness is generated by one's own misdoings and/or other people's evilness.

4.5. BETWEEN SCIENCE AND FAITH: THE ALLOPATHIC USE OF HOMOEOPATHY IN POLANCO.

The connections between illness/healing, and between social and individual sin/redemption are central to the discourse of 'new' and 'traditional' churches as well as the 'traditional' practice of the *curandero*. Another polarisation/continuum also present in Polanco is between ideas of science versus faith within the medical practice of homoeopathy. Homoeopaths in Polanco conceive of a linear procession from 'traditional', idiosyncratic cures, related to faith, to 'new', scientific methods such as homoeopathy - a distinction which legitimizes and institutionalizes their social practices (Foucault 1972:53). Homoeopaths in fact advance an allopathic way of exercising homoeopathy, while patients' attitudes to homoeopathic treatment stress the aspect of faith/trust in the remedy and in the figure of the homoeopath. Patients use different alternative remedies, often together, and their perception of these different remedies is in terms of methods rather than principles - the element of faith and belief being fundamental.

4.5.1. THE ALLOPATHIC USE OF HOMOEOPATHY²⁵

The majority of the homoeopaths I met in Polanco had previously trained in allopathy. Doctor Samuel had held a consultancy in Polanco for more than nine years (six years in a consultancy in the parish of the Anunciación, during the time of Padre Francisco, then in his own consultancy near the market). Dr. Antonio, Dr. Diego and Dr. Piso consult, or have consulted at different times in a first floor studio in the *calle siete* ('the' homoeopathic pharmacy in Polanco which is on the ground floor of the medical practice). Dr. Consuelo and Dr. Magda consult in the parish of the Santa Magdalena. Magda is the only homoeopath who has not been trained as an allopathic doctor (she was originally a lecturer in chemistry

²⁵ For a brief introduction to the principles of homoeopathy, the difference between homoeopathic and allopathic medicine, and the development of homoeopathy in Guadalajara see Appendix C.

at the University, but left her job because it was badly paid). There are other homoeopaths in Polanco- three new consultancies were opened only a few months before the end of my fieldwork in March 1992 - but I did not have the chance to meet them. Except for Samuel, who trained in the 'Colegio de Homeopatas de Jalisco', homoeopaths in Polanco are self-taught or have done their training by assisting other homoeopaths. All of them are **alternistas** (see Appendix C) except Magda who is a **complejistas**. However, in cases of urgent need of medical intervention, she turns to Consuelo for allopathic treatment (who consults in the same room with her on four evenings a week).

The practice of homoeopathy in Mexico has in fact been assimilated to a dominant allopathic model. The principle traits of this form of homoeopathic practice are the transformation of health into a commodity, the asymmetric relation between doctor and patient, and the exclusion of the patient from medical knowledge (Mendez 1984:7,8). Indeed, for the majority of homoeopaths in Polanco, the remedy targets the symptoms rather than the symptomatology of the sick person, and there is no sharing of knowledge between homoeopath and patient. Patients are often considered 'ignorant' by homoeopaths because they do not know the right food to give to their children, or because they do not wash what they eat properly, or do not take enough care of personal hygiene; in other words, they are seen to lack self-responsibility and to ignore the 'obvious' connection between illness and life-style. Patients use **remedios caseros**, but for real, 'lasting' cures they have to come to consult homoeopaths.

Frequently, so many patients are attended to in a short time that there is no time for individual diagnosis of a new patient - an element which is extremely important in both **purista** and **complejista** approaches. Only two homoeopaths (Dr. Magda and Diego) tend to ask varied questions about the personal habits of their patients. Homoeopaths justify the lack of in-depth diagnosis by the fact that there is a high turnover of patients. Many patients come just once; others may

come back only after a long period of time. However, what matters to the homoeopaths is to 'cure' as many people as possible²⁶. Hence psychological insight into the patient's situation during the actual consultation is treated as peripheral by homoeopaths.

Homoeopaths treat patients as people who ask to be relieved from pain. Antonio and Piso describe pain in similar terms to allopathic medicine: as something to be taken away, not as a possible sign of the curative process - which is a strong principle in the *purista* approach. Being *alternistas*, Antonio, Samuel and Piso give 'whatever is needed', both homoeopathic and allopathic remedies, to patients at the same time - an allopathic remedy for acute symptoms and a homoeopathic remedy for chronic manifestations. Moreover patients are not given explanations about the principles on which homoeopathy is based nor the name of the remedies they are given. The homoeopaths I visited in Polanco gave remedies at the level of the sixth or thirtieth potencies (the lowest) and none of them wrote the name of the remedy on the bottle²⁷.

Lastly, bodily contact between homoeopaths and patients is similar to allopathic practice. The homoeopath measures blood-pressure and pulse-rate, or examines the state of the tongue or the throat. When homoeopaths were questioned about the validity of this type of physical inspection in a homoeopathic treatment, they answered that the procedure is part of making the 'real' diagnosis, or that homoeopathy is a *medicina alternativa* because it can be '*alternate*' to allopathy. Only Dr Magda, who uses a *complejista* approach, pointed out that homoeopathy, in its original Hahnemann form, implies a radically different conception of the body and

²⁶ Dr. Piso commented to me: 'if the patient really needs to talk, we can talk outside, not during the consultation'.

²⁷ This is done in order to prevent patients from reusing the same medicament as a self-help remedy. This protects the interests of the homoeopaths because the patient receives the remedy together with the price of the consultation. Whenever he/she needs the remedy again, he/she has to come back to the homoeopath.

illness to allopathy.

The issue of whether homoeopathy is scientific or not is a point of debate for the homoeopaths in Polanco. Homoeopaths affirm that homoeopathy is a form of science or, in the case of Dr. Magda, that science is not developed enough to understand the scientific validity of homoeopathy. Drs. Diego, Piso and Antonio express instead their vision of homoeopathy as a science because they say it can be tested objectively²⁸.

However, the claim to scientificity of homoeopathy²⁹ - avowed by the practitioners in Polanco - reveals, rather than a truth of the homoeopathic principle per se, the particular position of the homoeopath vis-à-vis the patients and other doctors/healers. They tend to associate, to a greater or lesser degree, faith and 'magic' - in evolutionist terms - with everything which is backward and which is going to be 'naturally' overtaken by science:

Those who have no basic, academic knowledge, can be good homoeopaths but they do not know the natural evolution of the illness...it is important that homoeopathy is regarded as a science rather than faith and magic¹ (Dr. Samuel)

In fact homoeopaths in Polanco attack both any form of use of homoeopathy as a self-help method and the status of

²⁸ The stress on the inductive side of homoeopathy recalls the objective and testable link between rational thought and empirical method typical of allopathic medicine (Federspil 1985:98).

²⁹ This claim is 'true' because homoeopathy can be empirically tested with clinical evidence in humans and animals, especially in low potencies (Ullman 1988). However this is more difficult for negative testing. The lack of positive results can always be blamed on the incorrect remedy given by the homoeopath rather than on the inefficacy of the 'right' remedy for a specific case (Weiner 1989: 134). Nonetheless, this inconsistency can apply for allopathic remedies too. The fact that 'it is known where the allopathic remedy leads' (see Dr. Samuel's claim below) is an assumption which presupposes the specific concept of a 'mechanical' body rather than a testable fact. If the body responded just like a hydraulic system, the different efficacies of the same allopathic remedy in different patients would present the same theoretical problem.

'unofficial' homoeopaths who lack allopathic training (see appendix C). Some homoeopaths believe patients to hold faith on wrong grounds: homoeopaths make a distinction between a faith 'for faith' and a 'knowledgeable' faith (e.g in the workings of the allopathic remedy). Dr Samuel again:

It is important that people have faith, not because of faith, but because it cures, it is like aspirin, they take it and they know that it is good for them, they know where the remedy goes.

Drs Diego and Antonio endorse the desirability of the faith of the patient in so far as it guarantees that the patient will take the remedy as prescribed: while Magda and Consuelo believe faith to be a necessary but not a principal element in the homoeopathic treatment. However, for the majority of them, faith is nonetheless misleading because it obscures the 'real' relation of causality between a remedy and its effects. This shows again how homoeopathic remedies are treated analogously to allopathic ones; the effects of a remedy are attributed to the 'object', the remedy itself, and not to the process undertaken by the patient and the homoeopath - acknowledgment of this process would, on the contrary, attach a healing dimension to the homoeopathic relation:

I always repeat to the patients not to have faith in me, but in the remedy I give to them. I explain to them that homoeopathy has a slower effect than allopathy and that one needs to wait for a couple of months to cure problems that have been present for years, so they know that I am not wrong but that it is the remedy which is slow^k (Dr. Diego).

Nonetheless, patients do attribute great importance to the figure of the homoeopath/doctor and to his/her capacity to 'guess' (atinar) the causes of their illness. Their perception of homoeopathy does not stress the compartmentalization between 'science' and 'faith' which is important to the practitioners.

In conclusion, then, the homoeopaths perpetuate relations of power with their patients, and tend to reproduce a long lasting opposition between modern, scientific 'knowledge' and traditional 'experience' (McClain 1977) - framing health in an 'objective', non-'humanistic' language (Taussig 1980). Moreover, the stress on professionalization/ institutionaliza-

lisation of the figure of the homoeopath is a fundamental element in the practices which constitute the patient and the doctor as such (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1986: 64-65).

4.5.2. PATIENTS AND HOMOEOPATHIC CHOICE

Issues related to perceptions of homoeopathy by patients vary because they depend on their personal experiences of the homoeopath and on their socioeconomic condition. Those who can afford a consultation with a good allopathic doctor, outside the IMSS scheme, use their allopathic doctor to diagnose their sickness but often turn later to a homoeopath.

Patients go to homoeopaths for symptoms such as fever, intestinal and chest infection, problems of the digestive system, diabetes, and for *los nervios* (nerves), alcoholism and smoking. Children's diseases are often related to malnutrition, especially in the cases of people who live in the Cerro de El Cuatro - a poorer area south of Polanco. Normally patients do not use the expression 'curarse con la homeopatía' (cure themselves with homoeopathy) but instead 'curarse con los chochitos'³⁰ (curing themselves with granules). The common perception is that: 'no hacen daño' (they do no harm), while allopathic medicines are often criticized because they take away one symptom and create another.

Nati, one of the daughters of Don Jesús (see chapter II) and Diana (see chapter VI), finished her course at University and is now working as a consultant researcher at home. She has been combining different remedies for the rheumatoid arthritis from which she suffers. Not only Nati, but many others in Polanco combine homoeopathic and allopathic remedies with *remedios caseros*³¹. She often goes to Consuelo, but she still

³⁰ I think this word comes from the root to suck because the remedies have to be held under the tongue.

³¹ The analysis of the use of homoeopathy in urban Brazil, Campinas, shows a similar combination of homoeopathy with other alternative remedies: people do not entrust themselves exclusively to any particular form of healing and medicine but use different forms alternatively, either simultaneously or in

uses allopathy with her private doctor :

I have always been with a private doctor, but I have also been with the naturopath, but I could not carry on with him because it felt worse. I suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, my hands and arms are sometimes especially painful. I have also taken **los chochitos** [homoeopathic granules] because I have faith/trust in them and I also use the teas that my mother knows because they use them in her **rancho**. When I took the **chochitos** I was also taking vitamins and other things. I go to the homoeopath because I believe in her but in the end I go to my doctor.¹

Some of the people who cannot afford to consult good allopathic practitioners, are positive about homoeopathy. Doña Francisca is a middle-aged woman, who earns a little money as a street seller, but she also has to attend to her large family. She suffers constant pain in her lower belly. She was x-rayed in the **seguro** and diagnosed as having cysts which had to be removed. Since then she has been given antibiotics (for the last two or three years) for her acute syndrome:

In the Social Security, they do not treat you [us] kindly and they do not change the medicine. The Dr. [indicating Diego] has a kinder and more careful touch. I feel that homoeopathy does not harm but cures; the other takes away the pain but it does not cure.²

Many patients turn to homoeopathy as a last resort. Often they have tried the 'medicina de patente' (allopathic remedy) but their bodies have developed iatrogenic diseases. The cost of a homoeopathic consultancy is one of the reasons people chose homoeopathy but it is not the only reason. The consultancy of Consuelo and Magda in Santa Magdalena is much less expensive than consulting Dr. Samuel or Dr. Diego. Doña Eva brings her mother to check up on her diabetes with Consuelo because in the **seguro** they tell her 'no tiene nada', though she often feels dizzy and weak. She used to go to Dr. Samuel, when he consulted in the parish of the Anunciación, but now:

Yes, before it was possible, but now it is not, because he charges 30,000 pesos. He is already different...³

a sequence throughout their history of ill-health (Santos 1981: 148).

Consuelo's and Magda's consultancies are unique in Polanco because, having had their office in the parish for more than six years and charging affordable prices, they have had an opportunity to develop a continuity between patients and homoeopaths. Many patients come to visit Consuelo not only when they are in need of homoeopathic remedies, but when they need to talk about their personal problems. This happens with female homoeopaths, while male homoeopaths (who in Polanco charge more) are not often visited for advice on personal problems. Male homoeopaths want to be perceived as doctors who will find the right cure rather than as advisors on human concerns. The gender of the doctor, in this sense, shapes the form of the relation between patient and homoeopath.

Whenever I asked patients what they thought **los chochitos** to be, they expressed their 'ignorance', and associated **los chochitos** with natural remedies such as herbs. In fact, they had no general understanding about the way in which homoeopathy works, but they were aware it was different from 'la medicina de patente' (allopathy). They thought it caused less harm and that it was more natural. So the perception of differences between medical systems is not at the level of theoretical principle but at the level of choice and practical use (Mahar Higgins 1975).

'Tener fe en los chochitos' (having faith in the granules) is essential for the patients in order to recover. The answer why they use homoeopathy is: 'Porque funciona' (because it works) 'porque le tengo fe' (because I have faith in it): for patients, homoeopathic practice merges 'effects' and 'causes'. It functions because people have faith in it, but they have faith because it functions: it is a practical faith and a faithful practice. The mother of Antonia, (an active member of the 'grupo de salud') and Alfredo, a young sculptor/promotor in the OCIP, have suffered from **los nervios** for a long time. Her husband has been careless of his family responsibilities and she has had to provide for him and for their six children. She developed migraine, kidney and back pain, and used homoeopathy for a little while with few results:

I do not use the **chochitos** any more, I do not know, but I do not have faith, and if someone does not have faith in them they do not work. Probably I did not trust the doctor so much.⁰

It seems that for patients their *attitudes*, and not the remedy in itself, are fundamental in the process of healing. The 'science' of the doctor is seen as a form of guessing, and the result depends not so much on the remedy but on the ability of the doctor to diagnose (*atinarle*) what it is wrong. The figure of the doctor and his 'divinatory' guessing are important for the patients who chose homoeopathic treatment.

The homoeopaths, when they are not sure about the remedy, look it up in their reference manual. However, in Polanco they do not like to do that in front of the patients, because they feel that the patient may think their knowledge is inadequate. To avoid this to a certain extent, Dr. Antonio and Dr. Diego have put a list of the major remedies under the glass covers of their desks. The list references the remedies to number codes, used by the ground-floor pharmacy to prepare the remedy. In this case an element of 'oracle'³² - the list of remedies - is disguised to enhance the 'professional' side of the homoeopathic practice. However, the vital element for patients is not the 'objective' process induced by the remedy at a biological level, but the faith and the trust that he/she has in the remedy and in the figure of the homoeopath who prescribes it³³.

³² Santos (1981) describes how in urban Brazil (Campinas) homoeopathic reference-books (e.g. Kent's *Materia Medica*) are used as oracles by healers who also practice homoeopathy.

³³ There is a connection between the figure of the homoeopaths and the *curandero* in people's perception. Dr. Diego reported a case of a middle-aged man in Polanco who asked to see the '*ñomeopata*' (a mispronunciation). At the end of the consultancy he revealed his surprise to the homoeopath, because he expected the consultancy room to be adorned with candles, feathers and amulets typical of the working surroundings of many *curanderos*. The patient was surprised to discover that Dr. Diego practised in an environment similar to that of a doctor of '*medicina de patente*'. Dr Diego described his patient's puzzlement at his discovery, and was proud to be seen as a 'doctor'.

4.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the aetiologies behind different forms of health-seeking systems, which are alternatives to the allopathic medicine provided by institutional bodies (to which a minority of people have access), to private doctors, and to pharmacies in the form of over-the-counter drugs. But although allopathic medicine is, quantitatively, the major form of medicine used in Polanco, faith in its result is decreasing for several reasons, notably the poor service given by medical institutions; patronizing relations between doctors and patients; and the cost of allopathic remedies. As an option, people often turn to different non-allopathic medical practices - defined as 'alternative' medicine by the members involved in the Vidasana group and by homoeopaths - practices which identify quite different allocations of responsibility in illness.

The aetiologies held by **promotores**, women of the Vidasana group, by **curanderos**, homoeopaths and patients show similarities and differences. Part of the Vidasana group, the **curandero** and people in the 'traditional' church, express a relation between sickness and sin. The case of Vidasana is one way in which disease may be faced and acted upon. Some of the women in the group stress the divine and personal consciousness in the healing process; others focus on the pragmatic results, and the knowledge that experience in the group gives them to deal with everyday health issues. The **promotores** - who share their ideas with women members - often emphasize shifts in perception of illness and the body. The body comes to be a sign, an expression of interrelation within a socially-constituted body of humans. Pain, illness, and sin are still individually felt but are also an expression of the 'body' as society. Pain and sickness become a language through which the **promotores** transmit a truth about the world - a truth that women may assimilate or resist³⁴. Women's resistance is

³⁴ Here there is a parallel between the language of the CEBs and early Christianity, when pain and illness of the body became an objectification of truth (Asad 1983:321).

manifest in 'lack of understanding' of **promotores'** explanations and their attention to pragmatic results rather than aetiological explanations. However, even if some forms of passive resistance appear as self-deprecation, women find an opportunity for increased self-worth in the group, as well as an occasion for sociability. But they may also have to face female gossip - especially after the splitting up of the group - and have to struggle with their husbands to carve out time away from their household duties (see chapter VI).

For those who hold 'traditional' religious views, illness is believed to be related to personal misconduct towards divine agents or to be generated by someone's evil (e.g. Don Eduardo and some of his patients). However, in all cases - the Vidasana, the **curandero**, and the 'traditional' church - illness is a potential source of redemption, even if the practice of the **curandero** is denigrated by people who belong to both 'new' and 'traditional' Churches.

If sin and redemption are crucial themes of the medical practices enumerated above, science and faith are central to the practice of homoeopathy. In Polanco, homoeopaths draw upon a tension/distinction between science and faith, but their patients do not recognize such polarisation. Patients' choice of homoeopathic remedies depends on access to 'good' allopathic doctors, and on their faith in the figure of the homoeopath and his/her guessing, rather than on distinguishing and making a 'conscious' choice between medical systems (Mahar 1975, Stoner 1986). The majority of homoeopaths in Polanco practise in an allopathic way, and perceive a continuity between homoeopathy and allopathy. Their aim in practising allopathy is to diversify their skills and acquire more clients. Patients instead experience a continuity between homoeopathy and 'traditional' healing practices based on notions of faith in the remedy and the giver of the remedy. There is also evidence of a parallel between the figure of the homoeopaths and the **curandero** - an underinvestigated theme which would need further research.

Therefore, 'traditional' causes of diseases, centred on

personal sin and evil eye, coexist with explanations which blame disease on rich people and on the structure of society. 'Scientific' explanations coexist with aspects of faith and trust in homoeopathic practice and with *curanderos'* practice. In this sense, the case of Polanco shows a great pluralism of health seeking choices. Press's (1971) evolutionary Redfieldian model based on an opposition/continuum between medical systems - a simple, rural model and 'holistic complex' urban system of curer styles and healing - does not explain the coexistence and pluralism of healing/curing choices. The case of Polanco shows that there is a constant oscillation between 'traditional' and 'scientific' medical options which coexist and are valued in different ways by different actors. The diversity of healing techniques available indicates instead the presence of what Stoner calls 'medical pluralism' (1986:47) where choices are actively elected by patients between healers and professionals in relation to costs, efficacy and within multiple representations of medical systems (e.g. homoeopathy seen as a dubious science by the majority of homoeopaths themselves). Those choices takes place also in interaction with other non-medical forms of experience (e.g. religious belief). Moreover, those who tend to polarize and counterpose medical options and attitudes to illness as 'traditional' and 'new' or scientific and fideistic are particular actors such as the *promotores* in the Vidasana group and the homoeopaths, but many in Polanco combine these aspects in practice and do not perceive them as mutually exclusive.

The next chapter focuses on another aspect of the discourse of the CEBs-oriented parishes in Polanco: female fifteenth birthday celebrations. It shows that while the clergy and catechists tend to emphasize another polarization, which privileges meaning over forms and communal over individually-oriented celebrations of ritual, many others in Polanco do not draw such hierarchical distinctions.

^a. Los doctores están capacitados para fregar la gente, a los pobres... estudian para enriquecerse con el dolor del pueblo... lo que hacemos en el grupo de salud es para la gente que no está estudiada, la gente como nosotros, para que se prepare con lo que tiene.

^b. El 24 de Enero muy presente tengo yo,
un grupo de compañeras un miércoles se reunió,
tomaron mucha conciencia de problemas de salud,
estudiaron con empeño en toda su plenitud,
y viendo todos sus males buscaron la solución,
con plantas medicinales lograron la curación.
Analizaron problemas que hay en la comunidad,
y todos juntos lucharon cambiando esta realidad
Lo que el pueblo necesita es gozar de buena salud,
por esto todos unidos trabajan con plenitud.
"Vuela, vuela palomita párate en este rosál";
al despertar a la vida la gracia le quiere dar.
Con ésta me despido cantando esta canción;
estamos a vuestro servicio en el templo de la Anunciación.

^c. Puntos útiles en enfermedades respiratorias (por falta de vivienda y ropa adecuada).

^d...Toma demasiadas medicinas o se *envenena* con tranquilizantes y somníferos...no puede escuchar atentamente. Solo escucha lo que se refiere a *sí mismo*, pensando lo que va a decidir a continuación. Se centra en su yo insatisfecho ("lo que yo le dije", "lo que él me dijo")'.

^e. Busca ayuda para superar sus tensiones nerviosas a través de su energía mental y espiritual....se interesa en su yo de otra manera. No relaciona lo externo con su *propio yo*. Escucha atentamente y comprende el sentimiento de los demás.

^f. Hasta ahorita me ha dado experiencias positivas y negativas, por ejemplo, he puesto las placas, pero muchas veces es la actitud mental de la persona. Le puedes dar muchas placas pero no hacen efecto si la persona no tiene conciencia de ella misma y no tiene fe. Si con la fe que tienes, eres floja, tú misma deberías darte cuenta de tus contradicciones.

^g. No se lo que Don Eduardo hace, pero siempre hay mucha gente con él.... yo nunca he ido, su casa parece muy fea. Pienso que tiene mucho dinero, pero no quiere estrenarlo, dicen que vive en otra colonia en una casa muy bonita con otra mujer...

^h. La gente se enferma por el mal que otra gente le hace y también por mala conducta. Una persona nos cae mal y nos puede enfermar...si tenemos un pleito nos dicen que no lo vamos a olvidar, así la gente le pide al demonio.

ⁱ..Los que no tienen conocimientos básicos, académicos, pueden ser buenos homeópatas pero no saben de la evolución natural de la enfermedad...es importante que la homeopatía se vea como una ciencia no como fe y magia.

j. Es importante que la gente le tenga fe en los remedios homeopáticos no por fe, pero porque curan, es como la aspirina, se la toman y saben que les hace bien, saben por dónde va el remedio.

k. Yo siempre le digo a los pacientes que no tengan fe en mí, pero en el remedio que les doy. Les explico que la homeopatía tiene un efecto más lento que la alopátia y que tienen que esperar a veces algunos meses para curar el problema que tienen desde hace muchos años, así que sepan que no soy yo que me equivoco sino que el remedio es más lento.

l. Yo siempre he ido a doctores particulares, pero también he intentado con naturistas, pero no resistí porque me puse peor. Yo sufro de artritis reumática, y a veces me duelen mucho mis manos y mis brazos especialmente. También he tomado los chochitos porque les tengo confianza y también utilizo los tesitos que mi mamá sabe porque se utilizan en su rancho. Cuando tomaba los chochitos tomaba también complementos vitamínicos y otras cosas. Yo me he ido con el homeópata porque le tengo confianza, pero al final voy a mi doctor.

m. En el seguro no te atienden con familiaridad y no cambian la medicina, el doctor {indicating Dr. Dario} tiene un trato más amable y atento. Yo siento que la homeopatía no hace daño y cura, el otra quita el dolor pero no cura.

n. Sí, se podía antes pero ahora ya no porque cobra más de 30,000 pesos, ya es otro...

o. Ya no utilizo los chochitos, no sé, pero no le tengo fe, y si uno no le tiene fe, ya no funcionan...a lo mejor no le tenía tanta confianza al doctor.

CHAPTER V: RITUALS AND FIESTAS: BECOMING A 'MUJERCITA'¹ AND RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The 'new' Church - the Church of the CEBs - challenges existing values attached to 'traditional' rituals as far as the balance between religious celebration and popular fiestas is concerned. In the case of the fifteenth birthday celebration in Polanco - a 'traditional' ritual of recent origin among the low-income classes - CEB inclined priests have introduced a collective mass as celebration and have criticized large scale expenditure on fiestas as aspects of consumerism and family 'protagonism' (in the sense of wanting to be at the centre of attention). This is because CEB discourse tends to privilege meaning (the message of the ritual) over form (the performance of the ritual per-se).

The ritual of the fifteenth birthday used to be celebrated by the upper and middle upper classes but nowadays has lost its glamour for that part of society (Lomnitz Perez 1987). On the contrary, it has become an important ritual in the process of creation of female identity in poor neighbourhoods such as Polanco, as well as in the countryside. The fiesta, not only the mass, embodies this process of female self-becoming - where not only continuity but discontinuities take place (Crapanzano 1992) - and is a public recognition of a girl's and her family's social empowerment.

The ritual represents the opening of a phase in a girl's life, which will be closed by her wedding celebration. This period is identified as a time of 'illusion', because it is a time when representations of the nature of sexual relations and life differ sharply from the 'reality' of life after marriage.

Motivations for celebrating these rituals, as well as for not celebrating it, are important to an understanding of the contextual meaning of the fifteenth birthday celebration. I will present several case-histories to show how decisions about

¹ 'Young woman'.

whether or not to celebrate a feast for a girl's fifteenth birthday - and on what scale - depend on a family's religious beliefs, on their respectability in the neighbourhood, and on family attitudes to girls' education and training. These are the key factors which motivate both the scale of expenditure in the celebration of the *fiesta* and the choice of whether to celebrate it or not. The ritual of the fifteenth birthday celebration is analyzed at three different levels: in terms of the form and contents it assumes in CEB discourse; through the exegesis of the religious and sexual symbolism connected with the celebration as part of a process of gender and family identity; and finally, through a more closely contextual analysis of particular case-studies. Such analysis reveals that the symbolism of the ritual is not fixed but, instead, different aspects of its symbolic potential are stressed depending on a girl's family circumstances.

5.2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIFTEENTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The custom of celebrating a girl's fifteenth birthday is wide-spread in Mexican society. It consists of a mass celebrated in the church in order to give 'gracias a Dios' (to thank God) followed by a *fiesta*. The size of the party varies with the means of the family and the *padrinos*. This celebration was originally a feast celebrated in upper and upper middle-class strata but it has now filtered down to lower sectors of the population. In certain contexts in Polanco, the fact of deciding not to celebrate the feast while having the means to do so, or, conversely the inability to celebrate it for economic reasons, can be read as signs of distinction: indicating high or low family status.

The origin and the roots of the feast are unknown to people in Polanco. There is no recollection of such a feast in accounts of the past by women now around seventy years old. Women younger than sixty remember that daughters of rich families in their village of origin did celebrate the feast, but that it was a custom only of the 'gente de dinero' (rich people). Women between forty and fifty, brought up in the city, may have celebrated it, but if so the celebration constituted a small family gathering without a real *fiesta* afterwards, and no special dress was bought or made for the occasion. In recent years, the celebration has gone out of fashion among the upper and upper-middle classes in Guadalajara. Girls prefer to celebrate their birthday either with a disco or with a trip abroad. Lomnitz and Perez (1987) describe a similar phenomenon in other urban areas, such as Mexico City².

The fifteenth birthday celebration was originally

² Describing the rites of passage celebrated in the different branches of the 'familia Gomez', they write: 'Because they have been widely adopted among the lower classes of Mexico, however, fifteenth-birthday parties are considered affected and vulgar by most branches of the Gomez; among the richer branches they no longer occur. Instead, a girl's fifteenth birthday is marked by special presents, family parties and sometimes a trip abroad' (Lomnitz, Perez 1987: 166-167).

celebrated as a ball - a girl's presentation into high society. The symbology used in the feast recalled and still recalls elements of European culture (e.g waltzes, pieces of classical music, maids of honour and pages). The assimilation of fashionable European trends within Mexican society can be traced back to the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1887- 1911). During this period the indigenous heritage in Mexican culture was played down in relation to European and North American culture.

Reports about the feast started to appear in the section of *Sociales* (social events) of Guadalajara newspapers during the early 1940s³. The *fiesta* was celebrated in the house, and was an occasion to show 'who was there' from high society. It thus reinforced family status and social cohesion among a specific social class. Initially, the celebration was only a presentation to society, with no Mass given to thank God for the life the girl received. In the late 1950s, press articles started to refer to celebration of the Mass in concurrence with this feast (see Appendix D). Nowadays, press reports still present an 'ideal' model of the celebration of the fifteenth birthday, which is obviously unattainable for the population of Polanco but still constitutes a cultural standard to which *quinceñeras* and their families refer.

These ideals are influenced by the mass media and especially by soap operas. There have been varying interpretations of the impact of these programmes on a female audience, revolving around the issue of whether they are to be interpreted as a form of resistance or as adaptations to patriarchal discourse⁴. Such analyses are highly generalized

³ There is no record of such a celebration in the church archives, because it does not constitute a sacrament.

⁴ Telenovelas and fotonovelas have been considered to displace social phenomena of gender and class from communal social reality into personal psychological realms (Bibliowicz 1980). It has also been argued, however, that they do not represent strictly hierarchical gender roles, as they construct a narrative in which the hierarchy of power can be manipulated (Vellinga 1986). Feminist analyses have argued that soap operas can be read as a form of female resistance to

and their claims correspondingly disputable but it is nonetheless safe to say that soap opera are the means 'par excellence' through which images of an upper class life-style and consumption patterns become familiar to low-income populations and hence transformed into hegemonic values for at least some of the audience. Hence the message that CEB-inclined priests have attached to the catechism of this ritual in Polanco is directed against modernisation, consumption and 'protagonism'. Padre Rodolfo has introduced a special moment in the Mass for the 'fifteenth' of girls celebrated in Santa Magdalena at which the girls have to hold each others' hands and recite a prayer. This summarizes the Church's attitude towards the celebration well and implicitly alludes to the lack of 'deep' meaning' which ought to be attached to such a celebration:

Lord, I give you thanks for these fifteen years of my life that you have granted me...for my parents, my brothers...and for the love with which they have educated me...I love and admire this world, that is the work of your hands, the sun, the flowers, the stars, the water, the wind and what is born and grows on this earth...I recognize that the society I join today, with enhanced consciousness, has many negative aspects...nevertheless there are many good people ready to give me a hand to follow the good path^a.

The elements of being a part of an active community: the representation of the girl as 'close to nature' and the idea of taking the 'right path' are important elements in this prayer and in the whole celebration. In the catechism class, which takes place in the parish of the Santa Magdalena a few days before the celebration, some of these issues are discussed and developed.

patriarchal discourse. Firstly, because happiness in the shape of the traditional (e.g. patriarchal) women's roles as good mothers and caretakers can never be achieved permanently, but are perpetually, 'dramatically', lost (Ang 1986:123). Secondly, it has been contended soap operas develop through a female, scattered narrative and not through a linear one - characteristic of male discourse. However, in the end, this resistance also can be read as an adaptation - as a hegemonic consensus of a female audience - because there is no real challenge to patriarchal discourse.

The catechist in charge is a young girl in her late teens, who has participated actively in the life of the parish. Nubia, following the direction of Padre Rodolfo, leads a discussion with the girls before their Mass the following Saturday. The themes revolve around the physical and psychological changes which are happening to the girls during this period, and the different ways at their disposal of the teenagers for becoming active agents in the community Church. In the catechism class, the *quinceñeras* are told that a similar feast was celebrated in the time of the Toltecs and the *guerreros Aztecas* (Aztec warriors). Nubia stresses that, at that time, the girls who undertook the celebration were ready to be chosen by a male of the tribe and taken to the mountain. Soon after, they became pregnant for the sake of 'community' reproduction. However the 'ilusión de los quince' (the illusion of the 'fifteen') is extended beyond these Mexican origins. References are made to similar feasts celebrated at the beginning of this century in Jewish communities, and to the balls intended to introduce girls into society celebrated by the middle-European upper class in the last century. In this allusive way the subject of sexuality is introduced to the catechism class. The element of continuity with the past, through the celebration of the feast, is related to a 'natural' female sexual status. However, that continuity is not traced via the girl's mother or her grandmother. The catechist, and some of the *quinceñeras*, are aware that senior female relatives have not been celebrated this feast. Nonetheless the celebration of the fifteenth birthday becomes a connection with the 'ancestors', a link with the past that is acted out in the present.

5.3. THE CELEBRATION: A WEDDING WITHOUT HUSBAND

The ritual of the fifteenth birthday is a learning experience about gender identity and the construction of the female body. It both is and is not a rite of passage ((Van Gennep 1909) since it is not a process whose fluidity is counterposed to a static social structure (Turner 1974). While

it is constituted by moments of separation, liminality and reincorporation in the stages of the Mass and the *fiesta*, the ritual is not obligatorily undertaken by all the girls in Polanco who acquire the status of a 'woman' with or without celebrating it. The ritual does mark a passage into a socially recognized female status, because girls start to dress and talk in a different way, to change their attitudes and their bodily expression vis-à-vis the opposite sex. The ritual also expresses ways in which self-image and self-perception are constructed, and it acts out forms of social control over the female body. Moreover, through the ritual, the girl is introduced into adult society, albeit the ritual itself opens a time of 'illusion' (see below): in one sense the girl belongs to a new world but in another sense she does not, because her outlook on her new-life is defined as 'unrealistic'.

The dynamic of this rite of passage is composed by some standard features starting first with the Mass. The girl arrives at the entrance of the church accompanied by her parents. She is dressed up in a ball dress, preferably pink or peach colour. White is not a fashionable colour, probably because it is the colour of the 'real' wedding. The ideal style of the dress is 'nineteenth century', with big round skirts, voile, embroideries and high heeled shoes. However, for many families in Polanco, this type of dress is not affordable and girls choose cheaper versions, often home-made by close relatives; dresses are seldom bought in the specialized shops in the city centre near the 'Mercado de Gollado'. The girl is often carefully coiffured with various trinkets such as small artificial flowers (see Appendix A, # eight).

The girl, her parents, godparents and *chambelano/s* (male chaperon)⁵ wait for the priest to come to the entrance of the

⁵ Good (1991) reports that in the Sakandu - a rite of puberty which takes place in the Tamil Nadu State in South India - girls also perform rituals similar to a wedding ceremony but their chaperon is always a kin girl, a few years older than they. Avoidance of contact with a male in the ritual is to prevent the threat to the purity of female

church. Then the girl, on her godfather's arm, walks in a procession towards the altar, following the priest. The **chambelano** walks and sits just behind her. 'Tradition' would demand that the girl be surrounded by seven **damas** and seven **chambelanos**, all dressed in the same way⁶, but this is hardly ever the case in Polanco celebrations, though whenever possible there is at least one **chambelano**. The girl is led by her close relatives towards the altar, and then she is left alone to receive the Mass. The celebration of the Mass can be interpreted as a liminal stage, where she is recognized as a newly born **mujercita** both in the eyes of God and those close to her. When the Mass is over, the **quinceñeras** leave their bouquets of fresh flowers for the Virgin behind the altar. An artificial bouquet is used when pictures are taken outside the church and it will be kept as a precious souvenir. While the girl entered the church with her godparents, she now leaves the church arm-in-arm with her **chambelano**. The **quinceñera** may have a secret **novio** (boyfriend) before her fifteenth birthday. If this is the case, the **chambelano** is preferably not the same person; normally he is a friend of the same age, preferably a few years older, but never younger than she is⁷.

To be 'handed over' to the **chambelano** constitutes the first stage of her reincorporation. The **chambelano** behaves very differently from the ways he behaves in everyday life. He dresses up in a suit and tie; he is very gentle to the **quinceñera**; he often brings her flowers - acts which in another public context, at that age, might be interpreted as showing lack of masculinity. The power relation between the **quinceñera**

sexuality and her family's caste-identity.

⁶ There may be a correlation between the ideal number of **damas**, **chambelanos** and the celebrated girl. Fourteen people (seven **chambelanos** and seven **damas**) could stand for the fourteen years, while the **quinceñera** represent the fifteenth year/person. The stress is therefore on singularity: she represents the odd number, the individuality, everything which stands out unmatched.

⁷ Younger boys are called in a derogatory sense **squincles** or **mochosos**.

and her male counterpart is different from that in everyday relations, especially in the second part of the ritual constituted by the *fiesta*. Like the separation, the reincorporation takes place via a 'protecting' male side. This male protection is to defend girls from mixing with unfamiliar, male, sources of sexual attraction.

The *quinceñera* movement's towards the male side parallels the 'handing over' of the groom to his bride during the wedding celebration - which closes a cycle which has been opened by the fifteenth birthday celebration. This 'handing over' is symbolized by the *muertito*. The *muertito* is a little drama which takes place in some wedding *fiestas* in Polanco: the groom is taken away by his male friends, stripped of part of his clothes and then given back to the bride who will have to help him to dress again. This shows how marriage should end the time of *parrandas* (literally: binges) typical of a bachelor life-style, and makes the groom 'subject' to the exclusive care of his bride.

The celebration of the majority of fifteenth birthday *fiestas* that I witnessed in Polanco took place at home. The phases of the ritual are always similar: food is given to the guests after the opening dances, the first serving being for the godparents. Young guests come to the party especially to dance and drink⁸. The *quinceñera* dances to the opening music, first with her godfather and then with her father, or her maternal uncle if her father is absent. A typical passage of the ritual is a special dance with the *chambelano/s* and, if present, the *damas*.

The *quinceñera* has often choreographed a routine with her *chambelano/s*. Some girls rehearse for as much as three months to learn the steps and to acquire enough confidence to perform in front of a large number of friends and relatives. At this

⁸ In Polanco, unlike in the village of San Cristóbal, families tend to be aware of who is coming and the party is not open to everybody. However, rows can take place because '*gente que no se conoce llega para tomar y buscar pleitos*' (strange people come to drink and get into quarrels) (Juana's mother, see below).

moment in the **fiesta** the atmosphere changes. From a **cumbia** style the music switches into a middle European tune (often played with a slight cumbian rhythm!). Guests become quiet, and attention is centred on the choreography that the **quinceñera** and the **chambelano/s** perform. In this moment the **quinceñera** often directs the movement of the **chambelano**, thus leading her male counterpart in a public occasion. When asked why they dance a waltz, **quinceñeras** reply that it is somehow elegant: a **quinceñera** without a waltz is not a real **quinceñera**. If the piece of music was a **cumbia** there would be no difference between a **quinceñera** celebration and any other **fiesta**.

This dance is a strong emotional experience. The girl stands out on her own in the eyes of people, and fear of 'failing' and appearing clumsy are recurrent comments:

I was very nervous about the waltz coming out fine.
I was afraid about forgetting the steps, of getting
embarrassed in front of many people, but never in
my life will I forget this moment (Nubia,
catechist)^b.

So the dance which is often interpreted by the clergy in Polanco as a mere 'gesto' (movement) - a form without a content - is for the **quinceñera** an experience of a new ability to perform in front of a public, and of the emotions connected with a change in self-identity. In fact the girls' tensions fade as the dance goes on and she, with her **chambelano**, assumes more self-confidence in the dance. As the **fiesta** develops, her parents, as well as her older brothers, check that possible **borrachos** (drunks) are kept under control so as to avoid unwanted **pleitos** (quarrels), before the **fiesta** is over - normally around midnight.⁹

The excitement, the nervousness and the sense of fulfilment that the **fiesta** and the ball generate is a bodily and emotional experience. Betty, a twenty-two year old recently-married woman, recalls her **quince**, which was celebrated with a big **fiesta** in her parents' **pueblo** near

⁹ **Fiestas de quinceñeras** which go on after this time are criticized by the CEB-inclined clergy and their assistants in Polanco, because they go beyond the aim of a family gathering.

Acotlán, Jalisco in these words:

I felt realized, and it is better than the wedding celebration because you are innocent about many things and now I see all the good and bad... At the fifteenth birthday celebration, you are more fulfilled because you do not see what awaits you^c.

5.4. CEB DISCOURSE: CHANGING FORM AND CONTENT OF TRADITIONAL RITUALS

Anthropological readings of rituals as forms of social control and creation of social cohesion (Durkheim) and/or as functionalist devices to maintain existing authority as well as psychological attitudes (Malinowski 1974), are very similar to CEB attitudes towards maintaining or changing forms and content in celebrations of 'traditional' rituals. The absence of, or lessened emphasis upon, certain rituals are revealing evidence of the degree of group identity within a community. Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance, celebrate rituals neither around the figure of the Virgin nor on the occasion of the fifteenth birthday. The CEBs also have an understanding of religious rituals and popular celebrations in distinctive ways. Their goal is to 'use the symbols of popular religion and give them a new interpretation or their real meaning' (Padre Nemo). In other words the parishes' politic addresses the use of 'traditional' forms with 'nuevos y verdaderos contenidos' (new and truthful contents).

This is illustrated by the case of a procession to the Virgin of the Anunciación organized by the parish, and the celebration of the Virgin of the Guadalupe in the parish of Santa Magdalena. In the procession, floats from each *zona* - into which the parish is divided - portrayed the Virgin differently. The themes illustrated with pieces of mime and posters were problems of alcoholism, violence and family disintegration. The central message ran as follows:

Mary, model of the Church.. Mary, with you today we
will build peace, amidst the struggle and the pain
in our world, so that the hope of the Lord will
rise...Mary, liberator of the oppressed people.^d

The response of the people of the street was to join the procession or at least to greet it from their front door. Some of the women started to sing songs in honour of the Virgin such as the 'Guadalupana', but soon the voice lead was taken by the sisters singing CEB songs (see Appendix E for an example). The procession, like the Mass, *had to carry a meaning* in the mind of the organizers.

The Mass celebrated within the church, was well attended by parishioners. After the reading of a Biblical passage, the sermon did not consist of the usual priest's speech. It was instead a moment of *concientización* (awareness) that took place through a *sociodrama*. Some members of the CEBs sketched the living conditions of the *colonia*, while other couples passed by carrying a banner. The audience was able to read first the word egoism and then its opposite, love. Then in the same sequence, war and peace, the traditional Church and the Church of the poor, and so on. After the communion and the final benediction, a group of folk dancers came into the Church to greet the Virgin and to dance in the direction of the altar. A *kermes* (street festival) was held outside, where food and drink were sold to raise money for different groups affiliated to the parish. There was continuity between everyday life and ritual space; the *fiesta* and the dances were part of the celebration. However the ways in which *fiestas* are celebrated in the *Comunidades* do not appeal to some people in the parish community.

Fiestas promoted by the *Comunidades* focus on the communal gathering rather than on the show (e.g. the diversions staged, the food stalls). The celebration of the Virgin of the *Anunciación*, for instance, was carried out without the expense of *cohetes* (rockets) or *Mariachis* (a style of music band particular to Jalisco which is expensive to hire). Differential allocations of resources are also at the root of the dismissal of 'traditional' devices typical of *fiestas pueblerina* (of the village)¹⁰. This move was criticized by some parishioners: a lady who is part of the *Vela del Santísimo*:

The priest did not want to buy the fireworks for

¹⁰ The money was directed instead to the establishment of a service for the community, such as a sale of wholesale priced stationery at the beginning of the academic year, and a cooperative for the direct distribution of fish coming from a fishing community or Lake Chapala. However the community response even within the *Comunidades* was disappointing and much merchandise remained unsold.

the fiesta, nor to pay for the *mañanitas*¹¹. Why go, if there are no rockets? So I do not get up to go to the first Mass any more.^e

These changes in some elements in the celebration¹² challenge the division between the mundane, the political and the religious, and raise issues about, what a 'traditional' celebration is, and who controls it¹³.

Similar messages were put forward at the celebration of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the 12th of December. As Padre Jorge said in his sermon at the Santa Magdalena:

Mary is a model for getting to know the will of God through service, through giving and generosity, and when she is among enslaved people she defends them, she defends the little people.. She is a message of life, and we have to fight to defend her.¹

The Virgin Mary then becomes an 'Amazon' to help the efforts of enslaved people who have embarked on the process of liberation; she becomes a *Virgen liberadora* and not a passive listener and consoler of human sadness, as she is portrayed in the images of the 'traditional' Church¹⁴. Hence the criticism within the *Comunidades* of the *cultos Marianos*¹⁵. In the CEBs, the practice

¹¹ Birthday songs performed early in the morning.

¹² Other changes in the Mass are criticized by the parishioners outside the *Comunidades* such as the fact that Communion can be received from a sister or that the communion wafers can be received in the hands, rather than only in the mouth.

¹³ Negative comments about new ways of celebrating the rituals of Mass and processions are directed, though not openly, towards Padre Nemo or the sisters. 'Quieren cambiar las cosas pero no hacen las cosas como se tiene que hacer' (They want to change things, but they do not do things as they should be done) (Don Luís).

¹⁴ In the *Adoración Nocturna* and in the *Vela del Santísimo* the image of the Virgin Mary which is stressed is one of endurance, encompassing love, and eternal forgiveness.

¹⁵ 'Many people go to church to pray to the Virgin, but they do not want to change anything of their real lives, and they do not want to be aware of the need for such change'. (Mucha gente se va a la Iglesia para rezar a la Virgen, pero no quieren cambiar nada de su realidad y no quieren tener conciencia del cambio), (Benita, mother superior of the Carmelites in Polanco).

of 'external' Marian cults is associated with, and essentialized in terms of, the psychological 'nature' of Mexican people:

We Mexicans have a strong external cult...we go to church to pray to the Virgin when things are not going well in our life. But we ought to be Christians through action⁸ (Doña Paulina a coordinator of CEBs in the Anunciación).

Thus, the metaphor of fighting, which the **Comunidades** introduced, imports a 'new' sense of resistance to a 'traditional' symbol.

The celebration of the fifteenth birthday in Polanco raises issues about the 'new' contents of 'traditional' rituals. Because the fifteenth birthday celebration is not one of the seven Catholic sacraments, and is a relatively new ritual, the interpretation of the celebration is an open field both for clerical and pastoral agents. Catholic teaching stresses that the Mass is a chance for the girls to honour God for their having arrived 'intact' at such a point in life. This teaching concentrates on notions of purity and danger at this point in the new life-cycle and on the duty of becoming part of the community by participating in different activities such as children's catechism, youth theatre, choirs and **Comunidades**. Failure to participate in such community activities is interpreted as a lack of maturity and an inability to accept the responsibility which is appropriate to a mature Catholic person. However, many of the **quinceñeras** who participate in this class do not take up any activity in the parish afterwards. Since the arrival of Padre Nemo and Padre Rodolfo, the celebration in Polanco has taken place in groups, but tensions have arisen in relation to this form of celebration between personal and family empowerment, family and community identity. So some families in Polanco have decided to celebrate the Mass in other parishes outside Polanco.

In the Santa Magdalena, all the **quinceñeras** who happen to have their birthday in the same month go to Mass on the last Saturday of that month. Padre Rodolfo and Padre Jorge, in

their sermons, underline that this Mass reaffirms the principle of the baptism¹⁶ as a renewed initiation into the life of the Catholic Church. A former priest in the Santa Magdalena, Padre Hermilio, points out the problem the Church faces in understanding and interpreting a 'new' ritual which acquires importance in people's lives. However he, like the other priests in Polanco, emphasizes a 'search for meaning', stressing the 'word' above the 'movement':

There is also - and we must not forget it - a mentality which is not easy to change. It looks for the celebration without catechism, *the act without words*...The majority of the people want the Mass as a step in order to celebrate the "fiesta", which is sometimes reduced to an expression of consumerism and of a materialist society...However, meanwhile there will be the need to create spaces where pastoral activities improve opportunities, to provide those moments in life in which our people feel greater significance and fulfilment, in order to offer there the message of Jesus Christ and the sacrament of the faith.. We need to develop those rituals that are already lived and celebratedⁿ (Cardenas 1987: 122). (My translation and emphasis).

The polarisation between a meaningful act and a 'fiesta in itself' is drawn in the catechism used by the Comunidades. In fact, Padres Rodolfo, Nemo and Hermilio believe that the Mass for the fifteenth birthday entails a transformation of girls' consciousness and focus of action from family/personal to communal levels. Padre Nemo and Padre Rodolfo affirm that people need to overcome individualistic/egoistic tendencies which call for protagonism. This celebration becomes an opportunity for strengthening a sense of community rather than an occasion for family status differentiation. 'Protagonism', in the words of the priests is associated with individualism, urban atomization, and materialist culture. The ritual itself is transformed to carry a new message, and a different emphasis is placed upon the Mass and the fiesta.

The 'resistance' of a part of the population to communal celebration suggests that additional issues are at stake.

¹⁶ The girls are made to reaffirm, as in the confirmation, the baptismal vow of rejection of Satan.

Priests and their associates understate the importance of the Mass and the *fiesta* as experiences in the process of the creation of female self-identity. The fifteenth birthday celebration is 'the day' of the girl: in fact, the priest has to call the girls by their names, otherwise 'si los Padres no llaman la quinceñera por su nombre yá no es su misa' (if the priests do not call her by name, it is not her Mass) (Padre Hermilio). This coincides with the fact that a girl's name is very rarely used in speaking about her. Girls are 'la hija de la que vende pollos...la hija de la del puesto de tacos....la hija de mi compadre' ('the daughter [of the woman] who sells chickens...the daughter [of the woman] who sells *tacos*... the daughter of my godfather...') and so on. The identity is not via name but via their attributes, their spacial location and the social function of their parents or close senior relatives. Moreover, the actual ball, the waltz danced with the *chambelano*, constitutes an experience of self-empowerment which goes beyond that of consumerism and 'personalism'.

The celebration of this feast also highlights a tension between a young woman's desire for freedom and her family's respectability and control over her. On the one hand, the girl is the centre of the feast and expects subsequently to receive more freedom of manoeuvre and of decision making within the close family environment. However, this is rarely the case, and family control actually becomes greater, as I observed in many cases in Polanco. Hence tensions which are highlighted in this celebration in Polanco are not only about religiously more or less meaningful acts, but also about characteristics of individual/family and communal celebration. These *fiestas* then are not just a form of social control and differentiation of family status, but also constitute an important moment for a girl's self-identity and that of her family. People may be 'aware' that *fiestas* imply 'unnecessary' financial commitment, nonetheless they go ahead regardless of CEB criticism. The clergy's limited understanding of the motivations behind expensive feasts, reveals the difficulty of integration elements of 'popular culture' into CEB discourse.

5.5. BECOMING A 'MUJERCITA': THE TIME OF ILLUSION

In the rest of the chapter, I analyze the symbolism of the fifteenth birthday celebration, and discuss its exegesis in the light of the heterogeneity of different case-histories. The exegesis of rituals is per-se problematic if rituals are conceived as acting out mental structures (Levi Strauss 1966), or as a-priori symbolic¹⁷, meaningful statements about the world rather than evocative of it (Sperber 1975), or as somehow embedded with truth and 'deep' meanings (Goody 1977). But rituals bring about experiences in the world rather than merely represent them. They are performances both at an utterance level - verbal statements are themselves action (Austin 1962, Tambiah 1968) - and at a bodily level. They are learning experiences about directionality, journeys in the world (Parkin 1992). In which case symbolic and hermeneutic interpretations of rituals should not be abstracted from the context of power relations between the agents to be involved (Foster 1990).

In common language, the fifteenth year is referred to as the time of glory for a girl. Phrases such as: '*..parece de quince [which means you look very well],...te pusieron como una de quince [you recovered completely from a disease]*': identify this age with a physically powerful stage. In the imagery of both young and older women in Polanco, the fifteenth year represents a period of illusion, *la ilusión de los quince* :

You are like blossoming flowers.... what will shine is not your dress, but your soul, the purity of your soul..now you can start really to be somebodyⁱ (Nubia, coordinator of the catechism).

The time of illusion in female life is when girls hope to enjoy themselves before assuming responsibility for their own family. This expression is used by women of different age, but it can also be used by fathers to refer to their daughters. This period goes on throughout the *noviazgo*, so it evolves around a 'fantasy' of what life and especially love can be. The fifteenth birthday celebration coincides with the

¹⁷ By which I mean interpretation of the ritual process as constituted by symbols, opposed to a structured everyday reality (Turner 1969).

acknowledgment by the family (especially the father) that a daughter is ready to have a sweetheart (if she does not have one already). The father gives her the *permiso de porta* to see the boyfriend on the threshold of the house for a set period during the evening. Time and modalities depend on the strictness of the father and the willingness of the mother to 'cover' for daughters when they break the rules.

The fulfilment of family duties is expected from a girl well before her fifteenth birthday. The girl already knows her duties in the house :

One knows already how to sweep and wash the floor before her fifteenth... She knows what needs to be done in the house. If the mother goes out she already knows how to take care of the brothers^j (Milena).

The ritual can mark a transformation of appearance (the use of make up and more fashionable clothes), but that transformation is part of an ongoing process that has started well before fifteen. In this sense the fifteenth birthday celebration embodies a process of transformation rather than a clear-cut step from one irreversible stage to another.¹⁸

Some mothers remarked to me that at this age daughters start to be more selfish towards their brothers and sisters. They become more helpful in the house, but at the same time they start to carve out their own 'private' space both metaphorically and physically; 'their territory' may well be just one corner of a room, which is often shared with other sisters. Moreover, the process of becoming a *mujercita* takes place through becoming acquainted with a specific female knowledge that has to be kept separated from the other sex. The mother of a *quinceñera* (mother of Milena see below) talking about her youngest daughter of twelve:

She is turning into a little miss but she is still slow. She asked her father not her mother why her nipples were sore. My other daughter, who already celebrated her *quince*, would have never done it,

¹⁸ In fact the *quinceñera* during her feast may receive a range of presents (perfumes, tights, make up, but also teddy-bears or other stuffed animals) which mark a co-existence of childhood and adolescent elements in this age of puberty .

because she knows that these are things she must ask her mother about. The younger daughter wanted to behave like an older *señorita* but she should not ask her father about those things^k.

The area of 'knowledge' which begins with the *quince* is related to qualities of the body and social patterns of bodily interrelations. The religious message of sexual purity connected to the ritual relates to this body of knowledge.

The Mass for a *quinceñera* is to thank God 'de no haber fracasado'. *Fracasar* literally means to break badly as a result of hitting or being hit. Metaphorically it signifies becoming pregnant and therefore losing virginity; this metaphor reveals that the girl's body is interpreted as an unpenetrated whole. Her purity is a 'natural' purity, which evokes the transparency of nature. *Fracasar* takes place when this whole is seen as broken. The ritual process, through the symbolic values of the elements used in the feast, constructs a dimension of female 'gentleness', 'beauty' and 'magic' outside everyday reality. The dress, the *moños* (cloth applications), the *peinados* (hair style) that the *quinceñera* wears, the *cojines* (cushions) and *copas* (champagne glass) that she may receive from different *madrinas* (godmothers) refer to dimensions in which both class differences and the evilness of female body are absent. Therefore the fifteenth birthday celebration, as the beginning of the time of illusion, suggests a whole female body celebrated in its integrity¹⁹.

The fifteenth birthday celebration celebrates a 'whole body' which has not been penetrated by 'reality' yet. This integrity should last until the wedding, because sexual intercourse and reproduction are part of that 'reality' which is associated with end of a 'dreamed' female freedom, or the

¹⁹ Collier (1986), discussing the changes in female self-conception in an Andalusian village, defines the 'old idiom of inheritance' as follows:

The status and reputation of the family thus rests on the degree to which its women are protected from penetration - by a woman's sense of sexual shame, by being locked away and/or by the courage of family men in repelling seducers (Collier 1986:101).

subordination of a 'broken body' to family control²⁰. So paradoxically the fifteenth birthday celebration is an experience of self-empowerment, as the time of 'illusion' is associated with the achievement of wider freedom and more responsibility.

If the time of 'illusion' for a girl is related to ideas of enjoyment and male kindness during courtship, in words and actions, the representation of the time of 'reality' is characterized by female suffering, male jealousy and lack of care (see chapter VI). Girls of fifteen know that the time of 'reality' is associated with aspects of female suffering and male betrayal - even if they often say that they will marry a different man who will not make their life miserable. So the experience and the imagery associated with the time of 'illusion' seem to suggest a 'suspended disbelief' rather than belief in the existence of a different kind of gender relation. That a girl may indulge in an act in accordance with 'la ilusión de los quince' is possible, then, in the eyes of older people, because it does not oppose their belief in what 'reality' is but only defers it.

The aspect of family control and status opened by the fifteenth birthday celebration leads to tensions between individual and familiar identity. The considerations weighing on the choice whether to invest resources in a feast, especially in families with limited means, exemplify some of the tensions between personal and familial will. This became clear in a celebration which took place in the village of San Cristóbal (see chapter II).

Dolores Concepción did not particularly want to celebrate

²⁰ This is the case of those single mothers that I observed in Polanco. Families react differently to pregnancies out of wedlock. If the father of the baby does not want to 'reparar' the situation (literally to mend, metaphorically to marry the girl), she will turn to her family. Parents, and father especially, may react by preventing her from staying in the house while she is pregnant and sending her to some relative's house. However, after the birth of the grandchild she is reaccepted into family life, though on the condition that she respects considerable limitations of her freedom.

her feast. Her father had left her mother when Dolores was very young, and she grew up with her grandparents in the village, while her mother worked in the house of a rich family in Guadalajara. She would have preferred to spend the money to build a separate room for herself in the house (which was large but unfinished). Her grandfather, instead, wanted a feast with Mariachi, who would play for her at the exit of the church. Her grandfather bought her fashionable clothes, but she did not like them; she felt more comfortable wearing her old large dresses²¹. The majority of people in the village came to the feast, which was considered very successful by the villagers. The fiesta was an important moment for the grandfather to show that he had given his granddaughter proper 'fatherly' protection. Although he had not undertaken this celebration for his own daughter, he did do it for his granddaughter. The status of the family is reaffirmed by the wide participation of villagers in the feast. In fact a month later another fifteenth birthday celebration took place, but the family was from a poor rancho nearby. There was a similar profusion of food and drink but hardly anybody participated and the scene looked sad. The comment of a young man in the village was that:

Si la gente es pobre y también si la fiesta es buena, no se para la gente (if the people are poor even if the party is good, the people do not stop by).

Other comments were that the *quinceñera* *did not look* right, as if she wanted to be somebody she was not: in her fifteenth birthday celebration she was still a poor *ranchera*. The wish to maintain family reputation and status within the social life of the village were strong motivations in the fifteenth birthday celebrations - motivations which make the intentions of the *quinceñera* secondary, if different from that of their parents/grandparents.

²¹ A few months later, in a fiesta, I saw her dressed in what the grandfather had given her, and her room had not been built yet.

If the Catholic symbolism of the fifteenth birthday celebration relates to a girl's virginity, the ritual experience can be valued apart from such a meaning: the reality of a girl's life can be discordant with some of the symbolic meaning of the ritual. Such was the case of Tania, a pregnant girl who celebrated her fifteenth birthday and got married a few months later. Everyone in her family, as well as the priest, knew the situation but the celebration took place nonetheless. Her father, who worked outside Guadalajara did not come for the ceremony, and the feast was celebrated in a lower key than Tania would have expected if her condition had been different. The *chambelano* was her fiancé and she danced the waltz as any other *quinceñera*. She had dreamt for so long about this feast that the fact of being pregnant was not enough to prevent it from taking place. The process of becoming a *mujercita* cannot be denied to a girl by the fact of being pregnant, even if unmarried pregnant women should not be celebrated in public²². But the experience of *being celebrated* in the ritual, and the enactment of dreams, can be stronger than the symbolic message of virginal purity that the ritual embodies in the social and religious context. In this case the 'reality' of a female 'broken' body coexists with the representation of a time of 'illusion', in which the female body is symbolically still 'unbroken'.

This interplay between the 'real' and 'illusory' is significantly shaped by the influence of television soap operas. It has been argued that the experience of a

²² Arnold (1978) points out that in Catholic rural Jalisco, virginal and motherly dimensions of the Virgin Mary represent the field where women's self-identification takes place. The only adult women who are allowed to participate in religious public rituals and sponsoring a *fiesta* are spinsters and, in a sense, they belong to both categories. Spinsters represent sexual purity but also mother-like qualities because they act as godmothers and they intercede for family and relatives with prayers. In fact, as married women, they 'keep [the] household's relationship to the supernatural on even keel' (Arnold 1978: 52) (see also chapter VI).

'melodramatic imagination',²³ combined with psychological projection, indicate a 'refusal to accept insignificant everyday life as banal and meaningless' (Ang 1985:79). Not only 'illusionary', but also 'real' time after marriage can therefore be read as the articulation of values, which create meanings out of everyday life.

Much of this articulation is at the level of social and personal imagery. The latter is difficult to research via anthropological method because it is often part of the 'unsaid'. Moore (1994) has stressed that the representative aspect of gender, that is the imaginative and performative, needs to be re-represented and resignified through social action (e.g. rituals). This is because the experience of the engendered body often resists social discourse - which imposes a regime on intelligibility of the body itself. The ritual of the fifteenth birthday feast, and the time of 'illusion' which the ritual initiates, are also imaginative experiences, where gender categories are re-represented and sometimes resisted (unfortunately I lack further ethnographic material about such resistances).

In conclusion, the fiesta of the fifteenth birthday celebration is not 'a gesto sin palabras', a meaningless or consumptive pattern, but is a real experience about 'illusionary' time. CEB emphasis on the meaning of communality, rather than the importance of individual performative acts overlooks the relevance of the drama (Turner 1982) as expression *pour-soi* of the ritual (Parkin 1992:17). The performative aspect becomes central when the fifteenth birthday celebration fails to correspond to its socially and religious accepted meanings (e.g. Tania) and explains also why many *quinceñeras* decide to celebrate the fifteenth birthday in parishes outside Polanco. The celebration, through the emotional experience and the symbolism of the ball, the waltz

²³ This imagination articulates with other imaginative strategies such as 'humour, romanticism and rebelliousness' so it does not reveal a passive, fatalistic individual\consumer, but an active spectator who enjoys pleasure and articulates meanings.

and the dress, formally introduces girls into a 'new sexual world', and at the same time 'defends' them from it. But the experience of the ritual cannot be read just at the level of symbolic meaning. It has to be understood through the idiosyncratic aspects of particular sets of social relations. The next sections expand on these aspects.

5.6. MASS AND FIESTA IN CONTEXT

For various reasons, the celebration of the fifteenth birthday does not take place for all the girls in Polanco. Different cases presented in this section show that the ritual is valued differently in distinct family settings because it enhances diverse aspects of female identity. Moreover the cases presented show that the ritual creates discontinuities as well as continuities in the process of becoming a *mujercita* in Polanco.

5.6.1. CELEBRATING OR NOT CELEBRATING

When the family is keen on celebrating the daughter's fifteenth birthday the feast can take place in various ways. The most expensive form involves the nuclear family, together with godparents and other members of the extensive family, pooling resources to rent a *casino* - a ballroom - for the feast. Although I heard of such occasions, I never personally observed such a case in Polanco; similar expenses are encountered in *fiestas* which take place in the village of origin of one or both of the *quinceñera's* parents. Opting to celebrate a life-crisis ritual in the village rather than in Polanco not only informs the community about the status and prestige held and acquired by the migrant family, but also reinforces a tie of belonging on the part of the offspring even if they were, as it is often the case, born in the city. In these circumstances, the parents may express the wish that one day, the *quinceñera*: 'se case con uno del pueblo' (gets married to someone from the village). In other cases, the celebration may take place in the open air - in a *granja* (farm) that a relative or a *compadre* has put at the disposal of the family. However, in the majority of cases the party is held in the house of the family and a *luz y sonido* (stereo system and lighting) is rented or a band is paid to play live music. However, if the family cannot afford the feast or is not keen on the celebration (see below), the birthday may be celebrated with a good meal at home between close relatives.

The main reason why some girls celebrate their Mass and

others do not is economic: the cost²⁴ of the whole feast varies, but if there is live music, it is at least around a million and a half pesos (around 500 U.S. dollars). In the case of financial shortfall, resources are pooled within the extended family; often godparents help to cover part of the cost, buying the dress, the food or the music. Nonetheless, financial difficulty is not the only reason which prevents the celebration from taking place. Girls who do not celebrate the feast may be divided into two groups. Those who come from households in straitened economic circumstances, and those who prefer to spend the money which would otherwise be allocated to the feast differently - such as going to the beach or saving to buy a small car.

The absence of celebration of the fifteenth birthday in well-off families marks a sign of distinction of family status both within Polanco, and within the *pueblos* of origin. With the exception of a few well-off and respected families, which look down upon this feast in San Cristóbal (see chapter II), families pool resources to celebrate the feast. The educational level of the offspring of these families is much higher than average; women who did not celebrate their *fiesta* are now teachers, or university students. This dynamic is also observable in Polanco. Families such as the Ortega (see chapter II), whose members -both female and male- have achieved a high degree of educational and professional status in comparison to the average standards of Polanco's population and which have a highly respected status within the neighbourhood, look down on such a feast:

None of us celebrated the fifteenth birthday because values are very important in this house. For my mother, courtship is very formal, and can start from the age of twenty-two onwards when one has finished her career. So why celebrate the fifteenth birthday and waste so much money...¹
(Maribel)

²⁴ The basic costs consist of dress and shoes for the *quinceñera*; food, normally *birria* - a meat dish - beans, tortillas, a *pastel* (cake) and *refrescos* (soft drinks); the fee for the Mass, which varies from church to church, and the charge for the rental of music equipment.

None of the daughters²⁵ has married young (two are still unmarried in their late twenties and early thirties). Their professional status has put their relationship to male partners in a different perspective. For the family Ortega, celebration of the feast of the fifteenth birthday in Polanco would not have been a sign of distinction, because the public recognition of their daughters' rights to have boyfriends was not a priority for them at the age of fifteen but only later, once they had finished their education. There was no need for their family to celebrate the fifteenth birthday feast to improve their status within the community. On the contrary, it would have put the family on a social level to which it did not want to belong. The decision of the Ortega family vis-à-vis the celebration could be seen as both individual and family emancipation from communal identity, where the importance of a personal career has replaced the importance and 'pressure' to celebrate the ritual.

Therefore the celebration of the *quinceñera* in Polanco can be interpreted in two different ways. It is a demonstration of family status and prestige in the eyes of neighbours and of the branches of the extended family. However, it can also be regarded as a vulgar celebration which enhances certain aspects of female identity, emphasizing particular patterns of development of female life and sexuality.

Many girls in Polanco dream about their fifteenth birthday celebration in advance, but not all of them do. Some are particularly interested in the celebration of the Mass and the fact of holding a family gathering for such an occasion; other girls privilege the importance of the feast - 'their feast' - over the experience and the content of the Mass.

Girls who have dropped out from school at an early age and those who are still studying, tend to emphasize quite

²⁵ Two of the Ortega sisters have been involved, on and off, in the activities of the *Comunidades* in Santa Magdalena for a long time, even if their mother holds a more 'traditional' view of religion.

different meanings attached to the ritual. Girls at school are more protected by the family than girls who already work, and they often have to decide between studying or having a boyfriend (courtship on a regular basis occupies part of every evening). In the majority of cases, girls' freedom of movement after the quince is reduced. The parents, especially mothers, 'se pone más busa' ('se pone más abusada') [which means she is going to keep a special eye on the daughter]. The girl is allowed to see her novio, but if they go anywhere together she will have to bring along el tercer mosco - the little daughter/brother.

5.6.2. MILENA, ANGELICA, SABRINA, JUANA AND ESTER

Milena, the fifteen year old daughter of Cuca and Juan - two active members of the Movimiento Familiar Cristiano - had dreamed about her fifteenth birthday celebration since she was twelve. Her parents encouraged rather than obstructed the idea. Six months before her birthday Milena started to think seriously about it. She looked at dresses, saved up a part of her domingo (weekly pocket money received from her parents), and found a little job to meet part of the expenses. Milena had gone out with her boyfriend (who lives two blocks away), since she turned fourteen. Her parents allowed her the opportunity to see him, but insisted she had to meet him in front of the house and that she should not go to any fiesta with him as yet. Since having a boyfriend, she has dropped previous male friendships. Even her female friendships have been reduced, as female gatherings are criticized by her and her boyfriend as a source of unpleasant gossip. Milena comments upon her quince as the moment to take 'el recto camino' (the right path):

Up to now I feel confused. I can be led astray by friends. But after my fifteenth, I will be able to see what is more appropriate^m

The process of becoming a mujercita takes place through a new awareness of male intentions so that 'no se dejen manociar, y aprendan a escojer' (you do not let them to manipulate you, and learn to choose) (Nubia):

I do not want to go out with my boyfriend far from home. I do not trust him. A friend of mine became pregnant because her boyfriend told her they were going somewhere, but they went somewhere else..ⁿ (Milena, before her fifteenth birthday)

Like many girls in Polanco, Milena was not sure that the family could afford the celebration until a few weeks before the date. Her family was in a difficult financial situation. The older brother was married, with a daughter, but living at home, and only one of her four brothers was actually working and helping his father run his taxi

business. Nevertheless, even if the situation was difficult, some female cousins offered to be godmothers of copas (champagne glasses), cojines (cushions), and zapatos (shoes)²⁶. An aunt bought the cake, the godparents lent their finca (countryside house), and another cousin bought her the dress. Many guests came to the fiesta, especially couples from the Movimiento Familiar Cristiano. The attitude of Milena's mother towards her quince was a mixture of pride and worry. Cuca feared that Milena would get married after her fifteenth birthday, because she had already been going out with the boyfriend for a while. Her concern was that 'se quedara con el primero' (she would stick to the first), making the same mistake as her mother, who regretted having stepped into married life so young and inexperienced.

Milena's power within family life changed visibly a few months after her feast. She was more often in charge of the housework. She used to play and argue with her younger sister, but now she calls her *mi hija* which is a term used to mark a status difference²⁷. Milena behaves differently with her father too. She used to hug or kiss him before he left to go to work, but now her physical relation with him has become more distant. She often complains that her brothers do not take her out to fiestas because girls may think she is one of their girl friends.

The language of a *mujercita* also changes: some expressions which are associated with the jargon of street play cannot be used any more, such as using 'nee' instead of 'no' or 'simon' instead of 'si'. Angelica, a niece of Clara (see chapter II), who recently celebrated her quince, states how becoming a little woman is related to the verbal mastery of uncontrolled passions:

When one is a child she repeats the things of other people as if she was somebody else and uses expressions which are not appropriate, for instance

²⁶ A wide range of particular goods sponsored by godmothers are given in life cycle celebrations such as weddings and fifteenth birthday; many of these items were not in use ten/fifteen years ago. There has been a considerable expansion in the market for such small objects which have become standard features of the celebrations.

²⁷ 'Mi hija' is also used between adult women who are not blood relatives. Although an affectionate term, it evokes a status difference between speaker and addressee.

"I am going to kill you if you do not do this". But she should say "Listen, if you do not do this..".⁰

However this control is not perceived by Angelica as a move away from childhood:

Now it is necessary to know what one does and why one does it and to be able to decide. But I still feel like a child. We carry childhood within us and we never should lose it. For that reason I like to play with my little sisters⁰.

Therefore the fifteen birthday celebration does not represent a clear-cut move away from childhood. The extent to which some elements of play and childhood are maintained after the age of fifteen depends on girls' personalities, their relation with the other sex, their role within the family, as well as on the degree of family control.

Sabrina, the first of four children of Alfonso - a coordinator of the CEBs as well as the MFC - did not think of celebrating her fifteenth birthday with a feast. Alfonso had to leave his job because of health problems. He now does small jobs on commission. The economy of the household is tight, but priority is placed on investment in the children's education. Sabrina and her parents hope she will be able to attend University in the future. Sabrina's parents' experience in the CEBs made them sensitive to the priority of the Mass over the feast:

There is no need to spend so much for a feast, what is more important is the Mass in order to give thanks to God, and to have a small family gathering. There are many people who get into debt to have a good feast, but it is better to spend on schooling⁰. (Elsa, Sabrina's mother)

The message was assimilated by the daughter; in fact, Sabrina asked just to celebrate the Mass. She was aware that her father works only part-time, but that her parents were doing their best to support her higher education²⁸. Her wish instead was more 'practical'. She wanted to save on the feast to economize in the long run to buy a small car. Sabrina herself was surprised, a few weeks before her birthday, by the insistence of her parents (especially her father) that they celebrate her quince anos.

Alfonso is aware from his experience in the Comunidades that there was no need to spend money on this feast, and that other people in the parish would have understood his

²⁸ Sabrina never had a secret sweetheart, but after her birthday asked her father for permission to go out with a schoolmate, who had asked her out. However, she clearly stated that she was not going to lose her mind over him. Her energy and effort were fixed on finishing the *secundaria* and being admitted to a *preparatoria*.

position. However, Sabrina is the first of his four children and the only daughter. For Alfonso, it was important that his daughter - towards whom, in Sabrina's words, he is extremely protective and jealous - should celebrate the feast. Her father is very strict with her, and she did not risk having a sweetheart before her quince.²⁹ Alfonso justified his insistence on the celebration by stating he wanted his daughter to have a nice memory of her quince, and, after all, Sabrina is his *consentida* (privileged one). In the end Sabrina was pleased to celebrate her feast because she was the centre of attention:

For each one the quince is different but all expect a moment of particular attention^r.

Sabrina celebrated her fiesta at home, had her *chambelano*, and danced with her father and her *padrino* - Luis, the husband of Estrella and coordinator with her of the MFC.

The relative prominence of the Mass or the *fiesta* in the fifteenth birthday celebration reveals issues of greater or weaker family control over the girl's sexual body.

Ester has been working since she was ten, and is now doing the cleaning in a *bodega* (shop). She is not able to read and write properly, but she looks very witty and appears older than she is because she uses make-up and tight clothes with confidence. Ester was born in a *casa chica*³⁰. Since she was young she has had to find ways to earn money and help her mother, brother and sisters with the precarious economy of the household. She looks somehow 'more experienced' than her age. She has had a boyfriend since she was twelve, and goes to fiestas with friends until late at night. Her mother admits she cannot 'control' her very much:

She is very rebellious. Sometime I cannot bring her inside at ten, but at eleven.. She wants to enjoy herself, but needs to realize that if she finds herself with something [being pregnant], then I will be not responsible: she will be..^s

Moreover neighbours comment upon her hanging around with different male friends.

The godfather of her fifteenth birthday celebration was Don Ernesto, a butcher for whom she used to work; he promised to buy her the dress, supply the meat, and pay for

²⁹ Her father's strictness even made him question her participation in the youth group of the CEBs because on one occasion the group went to a movie without asking for family permission. In his words, participation in the group should not be taken as an excuse for amusement without family permission.

³⁰ *Casa chica* is a single female parent household formed by a man in an extra-marital relation. The father of Ester lives in another state of Mexico, and rarely comes to see his six sons and daughters.

the music, but at the end 'se rajó' (he withdrew) and gave just part of the meat. So she borrowed a wedding dress from a friend, bought some shoes, and paid for the music. After the feast, the family was absolutely broke, probably skipping some meals, while the house looked run-down and sloppily maintained. This family spent more on the fiesta (they rented a live band) than other better-off families in Polanco on similar occasions. For Ester, the Mass was not so important, rather the fiesta and the ball is what she really cared about. However, she seemed disappointed at the way in which the feast turned out because towards the end, there were some pleitos (fights) and the music was not as good as she expected. She also expressed disappointment at the fact that almost none of her extended family, who were expected to come, turned up at the fiesta.

The glamorous component of an 'outstanding' day, in contrast to the poor daily life-style of her family, seems to be Ester's strongest motivation for celebrating the fiesta. Ester's precocious habits, her relationship with her mother, and the family's careless conduct in housekeeping have been negatively judged by the neighbours. She is not seen as a girl of honour, nor is her family. These are probably some of the reasons why the neighbours did not attend the feast. Ester's case shows an aspect of femaleness that claims freedom and pleasure, and rejects subordination to parental authority.

Juana seems an opposite case. She lived around the corner from Ester, and her family's control over her was much stronger. She studied as an accountant and is not allowed to go out with friends to fiestas. She spent a lot of time at home, and was described as very responsible by the members of her family. She wears fashionable clothes and light make-up, but without being provocative. Juana had two older sisters and an older brother who pooled money together to buy her the dress and sponsor the renting of a luz and sonido equipment for the fiesta. Her father, a maestro albañil (a chief building worker) bought the necessities for the party. Juana's fiesta was considered a success by her family and friends even if there was not a live music band. In contrast to Ester's case, the unity of Juana's family and its respectability among neighbours contributed to the positive realization of the feast.

Juana especially enjoyed the Mass and the fact of having all her family around her. After the celebration she described the emotional intensity she felt at being there near the altar and receiving her Mass. Now she wishes, after her fifteenth:

To have more responsibility: I am not a child any more, and that they [would] let me do what I need to do and to study and work^t

Her mother is protective towards her because she feels that now she has to keep an eye on her, not for Juana herself, but for the boys who could engañarla (deceive her):

If the girl has more than one boyfriend people talk badly about her afterwards. But the boy can have more than one girlfriend at the same time!³¹

In respecting her family rules, and accepting the need to be protected from the danger of male sexual intentions, Juana - unlike Ester, who seems to look for dangerous encounters - ideally embodies the symbolic meaning of the celebration of a *quinceñera*: submission, virginity and control of the female body, which means 'appropriate' dress, language, and social relationships with the same and the opposite sex. The cases of Ester and Juana show that this rite of passage develops around the tensions between different aspects of male and female sexualities. Female sexuality should be controlled, kept away from male 'wandering'/philandering (see chapter II). But at the same time virility is measured in relation to a man's capacity to attract the opposite sex. So female sexuality - when it is actively expressed in circumstances of male 'wandering' - becomes threatening because it is deceitful and uncontrolled (Martin 1990). Yet some girls may be actively looking for sexual encounters. The fifteenth birthday celebration, then, becomes a theatre for different and often opposed female identities³¹.

The cases of Milena, Sabrina, Juana and Ester show that the same ritual can enhance different aspects of womanhood in relation to the life-styles and religious beliefs of girls' families. A celebration held by a family involved in the CEBs (e.g. Sabrina) tends to be less glamorous than one held by those only involved in more 'traditional' religious groups (Milena), because savings may be invested more in a daughter's education or in the acquisition of valuable commodities, rather than in

³¹ Diversity of female identities has been pointed out in puberty related rites of passage. Wilson (1980), analysing rituals of first menstruation in Sri Lanka among Catholic, Muslim and Hindu communities, has pointed out that a puberty rite of passage can be interpreted in different ways in relation to the different ideals of womanhood held in the groups in which the ritual is celebrated because 'ritual meaning is not confined to ritual action and objects, some of it rests in the cultural perception through which the ritual is viewed' (Wilson 1980:621).

the fiesta.

5.7. CONCLUSION

A 'traditional' ritual - such as the fifteenth birthday celebration and celebrations of the Virgin - acquires new meanings in the language of the CEBs. New meanings highlight a priority of communal identity over family and individual 'protagonism' or represent the Virgin as a fighter rather than just a consoler of the poor. However, priests and their assistants search for meanings, and the tendency to reject a 'gesto sin palabras' (action without word) (Cardenas 1987) confine 'traditional' fiestas to an emphasis upon the family as a distinct unity and on its social status. The fifteenth birthday celebration (and its absence) clearly carries a meaning of social differentiation and the transformation of female social status (Van Gennep 1909); however, the ritual also constitutes an important moment in the process of female identity and self-perception because it opens up a time of negotiation within the family concerning control over and definition of the female sexual body. This cycle will be ended with married life, when the time of 'illusion' - the time of 'suspended disbelief' - can be extended no longer.

At a symbolic level the 'success' of a fifteenth birthday celebration depends on how well the 'illusion' is dramatized in the experience of the ritual. The drama of the ritual constructs the female body through virginal images and metaphors of the body as a vessel - a vessel which should be preserved intact. Family unity, and the respectability of the family and of the girls reputation in the neighbourhood, are some of the factors which shape the 'success' of the fiesta. The time of 'illusion', which begins with the ritual, indicates the new complexity of a dimension of female identity. Girls acquire new responsibilities vis-à-vis family life and duties, while aspects of courtship and sexual imagery demand a loosening of family control. Girls are symbolically handed over to the male domain, but they also experience self-empowerment in the ritual. After the ritual, however, their freedom of action is often reduced, as well as their autonomy in relation to the male domain - this tighter control being one

of the causes of early marriage. So the ritual implies discontinuities as well as continuities³² in the process of becoming a *mujercita*.

Forms of resistance to family authority (e.g. Ester) reveal tensions between different female aspects. Those differences can also be seen in the absence/rejection of the ritual, as in the cases of the socio-economically better place of families in Polanco in which female choice shifts from marrying and forming a family at an early age to privileging 'individual', professional training (e.g. sisters Ortega).

Lastly, the exegesis both of the ritual and of its absence, has to be analyzed within a specific set of family relations. The ritual cannot be reduced to its functionalist elements which would emphasize the communal element and to the content of the Mass, rather than the 'consumption' of family feast. Nor can the ritual be understood only at a symbolic level as marking sexual boundaries, and as helping to construct the female body as a vessel, which needs to be defended from male philandering. The ritual is a performative act, an experience which may or may not be part of the process of creation of female self-identity. The ritual, then, needs to be understood within the context of particular sets of family relations - which are very heterogeneous - and also differing contexts of religious discourse and perceptions of 'class' and status, given that all these factors and economic considerations affect people decisions about whether or not to celebrate the ceremony and if so on what scale.

³² Dissonances have been underplayed in Van Gennep's analysis of rites of passage:

Ritual exegesis and the exegetical method in ritual analysis frequently (if not inevitably) promote the illusion of continuity and mask both discontinuity and dissonant experiences (Crapanzano 1992:262).

^a...Señor, te doy gracias por estos quince años de vida que me has regalado..., por mis padres, mis hermanos...y por el amor con que me han educado..Amo y admiro este mundo, que es obra de tus manos, el sol, las flores, las estrellas, el agua, el viento y lo que nace y se desarrolla en esta tierra..Reconozco que la sociedad en la que voy a integrarme más conscientemente a partir de hoy tiene mucho de negativo...pero hay también mucha gente buena, dispuesta a darme la mano para que vaya por el camino del bien.

^bYo estaba muy nerviosa que el waltz saliera bien. Tenía miedo de olvidarme los pasos, y me daba vergüenza enfrente de tanta gente, pero nunca en mi vida me voy a olvidar de ese momento.

^cMe sentí realizada y es mejor que tu boda porque eres inocente de tantas cosas y ahora veo todo lo que es bueno y malo..en los quince está más realizada porque no ves lo que viene delante.

^d María, modelo del pueblo...María contigo construiremos hoy la paz, con la lucha y el dolor de nuestro mundo surge ya la esperanza del Señor...María, liberadora del pueblo oprimido.

^eEl padre no quiso poner cohetes para la fiesta, ni para las mañanitas...y a qué te vas si no hay cuetes? Así que ya no levanto para ir a la primera misa.

^fMaría es un modelo de aceptación de la voluntad de Dios a través del servicio, de la entrega y de la generosidad, y cuando Ella se encuentra en un pueblo esclavizado defiende, defiende a los más pequeños...Ella es un mensaje de la vida y tenemos que luchar para defenderla.

^gHay un tal fuerte culto externo que tenemos nosotros Mexicanos..Vamos a la Iglesia a rezar a la Virgen cuando andamos mal en nuestra vida, pero hay que ser cristianos con los hechos.

^hHay también, y no hay que olvidarlo, una mentalidad que no es fácil cambiar: se busca la celebración sin catequesis, *el gesto sin palabras*...Gran parte del pueblo quiere la ceremonia como un paso para celebrar "la fiesta", que en ocasiones se reduce a ser receptores de una sociedad consumista y materialista...Pero mientras tanto habrá que ir creando espacios donde la práctica pastoral se vaya abriendo pasos, buscando aquellos momentos de vida que nuestro pueblo tiñe más de sentido y contenido, para ofrecer ahí el mensaje de Jesucristo y los sacramentos de la fe...Debemos de ir al encuentro de estos ritos que ya se viven y se celebran.

ⁱ Ustedes son como flores que están brotando yemas...Lo que va a lucir no es su vestido pero su alma, la pureza de su alma..Ahora pueden empezar a ser alguien de veras.

^jUna ya antes de los quince sabe barrer y trapear...Sabe lo que hay que hacer en la casa, si tu mamá sale, ya sabes cuidar a los hermanos.

^kSe está volviendo señorita pero está todavía atarantada. Le preguntó a su papá por qué le dolían los pezones y no a su mamá. Mi otra hija, ya cumplió sus quince y nunca lo hubiera hecho porque sabe que tiene que preguntarle a su mamá. La más chica quiso portarse como señorita más grande, pero no sabe que estas cosas no se preguntan a su papá.

^lNadie de nosotras celebró la fiesta de los quince porque en la casa los valores son muy importantes, para mi mamá, el noviazgo es formal, ya de los veintidos años en adelante, cuando ya una ha acabado su carrera. Entonces, para qué celebrar los quince, y gastar tanto dinero...

^mHasta ahora me siento confusa me puedo engañar sobre los amigos pero después de los quince, ya voy a ser capaz de ver lo que sea más conveniente'.

ⁿNo quiero salir con mi novio lejos de la casa, le tengo desconfianza. Una amiga mía se quedó embarazada porque su novio le dijo que la llevaba a un lado y la llevó a otro...

^o.Cuando una es niña repite las cosas de otra gente como si fuera otra persona y tiene expresiones que no son apropiadas, por ejemplo "Te voy a matar si no hace esto" pero tendría que decirle "mira, si no hace esto.."

^pAhora hay que saber lo que uno hace y por qué uno lo hace y saber decidir. Pero yo sigo sintiéndome una niña, la niñez la traemos dentro y nunca hay que perderla, por esto me gusta jugar con mis hermanitas..

^qNo hay que gastar tanto para una fiesta, lo que es más importante es la misa, para dar gracias a Dios y una pequeña convivencia con la familia. Hay mucha gente que se endroga para salir bien de la fiesta pero mejor gastar para la escuela...

^rPara cada una, los quince son diferentes, pero todas esperan un momento particular de atención para ellas.

^sEs rebelde, a veces no la puedo meter en la casa a las diez, hasta las once..ella quiere gozar, pero tiene que saber que si se encuentra con algo [being pregnant] después que yo no sea responsable, sino ella..

^tMás responsabilidad en mí, ya no soy niña, que ya me dejen lo que tengo que hacer y estudiar y trabajar.

^uSi la muchacha tiene más que un novio la gente habla mal de ella después...y ya.. pero el muchacho puede tener más de una novia y al mismo tiempo!

CHAPTER VI: GENDER IDENTITY AND FEMALE RESISTANCE

: -Valentina por qué no has tenido hijos todavía?

: -Bueno...mmm.. no es el tiempo todavía..

: -Es porque eres cobarde!

(Valentina why have you not had children yet?

Well.. it is not the right time yet...

It is because you are a coward!)

(Dialogue between Soledad and myself)

In Polanco becoming a woman, defined as the experience of women in 'real' time (see chapter V), is a multifaceted process which takes place in different fields such as: the religious community, the family, the work place and the relationship with other institutional bodies¹. Women's 'real' time is portrayed - and for older women is experienced - in terms of 'suffering' and hard work. Female identity and virtue is acquired through the presence of a man and through motherhood (Melhuus 1992: Levine 1993, Bohman 1984), and is shaped in continuity with, rather than as breaking away from, 'traditional' gender roles which portray women's roles as subordinated and abnegated to their husbands and as good caretakers of their children.

Earlier studies of gender in Latin America explored the stereotypical representation of gender roles which rest on notions of **machismo** and **marianismo**² (Steven 1973, 1975). But these gender stereotypes assume that Latin American women can be taken as an homogenous category, and that there is strict mutual determination between gender ideology, female role and

¹ This chapter focuses on the first two fields; the different dimensions are, however, interconnected (Moore:1988). For an analysis of relations between women and the State in Guadalajara see Craske (1993a, 1993).

² **Machismo** is associated with a psychological state of aggression due to insecurity, which is expressed through a lack of display of emotions, special attachment to the mother, and a myth of male hypersexuality. **Marianismo** has been defined as female spiritual superiority (counterposed to male predominance in the physical) which is rooted in the female ideal of the Virgin Mary (Stevens 1973, 1975). However, **machismo** and **marianismo** are semantically different concepts because the first is used in common language while the second is only valid at the level of symbolic representation (Melhuus 1992:125).

women's action (McEwen Scott 1986). By contrast later studies have focused on women's productive or reproductive labour (Nash 1980, Jaquette 1980, Gonzales De La Rocha 1986, Chant 1992) and considered motherhood and marriage relations as conservative forces militating against women's economic emancipation and their negotiation of gender boundaries (Beneria 1987:143); other studies have pointed out that migration to the city seems to have affected the 'traditional' hierarchy of gender relations by making them more egalitarian (Kemper 1977, De La Peña 1984). Most recently writers have recognized the necessity to deconstruct gender relations as well as notions of motherhood in order to see them both in a contextualized wider discourse based on the relation between civil society and the state (Westwood & Radcliffe 1993) and as expressions of a particular morality and agency (Melhuus 1992).

Motherhood cannot be taken at face value as an essentialized quality of womanhood (Westwood & Radcliffe 1993). In this chapter I argue instead that motherhood is a negotiated process which concerns both a principle of non-separation - in matters of sin and responsibility - and the definition of gender boundaries and power relations within particular family sets. 'Traditional' aspects of gender relations - those associated with female suffering, unconditional dedication to the husband, and male capacity to act as provider and hold authority in the family - are resisted respectively by young women who would like to increase their own skill and personal appearance and by young men who want to 'enjoy themselves'. Another form of resistance, by older women, is expressed through gossip, life crises and sickness. These tactics are not designed to overturn traditional gender roles, which older women often expect the younger generation to observe and respect.

Therefore, the chapter argues that female identity is not a clear category but a negotiated process. This process is not a linear one, as an analysis such as LeVine's (1993) seems to suggest. It cannot be perceived purely in terms of evolutionary development, which sees 'traditional' values of

self-abnegation and suffering for the family giving way to new priorities of autonomy and self-sufficiency. Resistance to 'traditional' aspects of womanhood in Polanco is rarely implied by women as a claim for their rights as women 'per se'; womanhood is still acquired through motherhood and wifehood, but the forms and the boundaries implied are shifting.

The first part of this chapter deals with the relation between parents (especially mothers) and children. The second part focuses on how women may resist traditional female roles of submission to the husband and unconditional service to the children, and how 'traditional' gender relations can be affected by an individual's active participation in the CEBs³ or experience of religious conversion.

³ Motherhood, nurturing and issues of life survival are central concerns in women's political participation in social life (Kaplan 1982, Martin 1990). Similar concerns have been found among women active in community grass-roots movements in working class areas in Guadalajara (Craske 1993a, Logan 1989, 1984, Lozano & Padilla 1988).

6.1. CONTROLLING THROUGH FEEDING AND SERVICE: COMPLIANCE AND RESISTANCE IN RELATION TO 'TRADITIONAL' WOMANHOOD

Motherhood has long been considered a central focus of Mexican social practice and political discourse. In State-PRI political discourse, motherhood has been the central focus for government action on women's issues⁴. Motherhood has been considered a central feature of the 'mexican woman' in culture and personality types of analysis (Diaz 1966, Diaz-Guerrero 1975). In rural areas Hunt (1971) has pointed out that mothers receive support, status and protection in old age from their children rather than from their husbands and that the mother-son relationship is stronger in intimacy and psychological dependence than the relation father-son. In lower income urban areas, mothers - in single headed households - invest symbolic capital in their children (Mahar 1992)⁵. Through investing their resources in their children's education women gain a good reputation within the neighbourhood, and build up both a network outside the household and strong bonds within it, which are crucial for their present and future status in the community (Mahar 1992: 288-289).

In Polanco 'traditional' womanhood is attributed by women to other women, who:

Endure everything that the husband does to them and live for their children⁶ (Lola, Mauricio's wife)

In fact 'traditional' motherhood focuses on the notion of service to (especially male) children and on the role of acting as a link between children and father⁶. Through service women actively control the feelings and actions of their kin. This element of motherhood becomes a form of controlling through

⁴ 'In Mexico policies towards women do not question existing political structures but seek to incorporate women, largely focusing on their nurturing roles' (Craske 1993:140).

⁵ Maher applies Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital which includes all material and non material things which give prestige, status and authority in a particular set of social relations.

⁶ 'Traditional' womanhood rests on 'welfare of children, self-denial and manipulation of the spouse' (LeVine 1993: 204)

feeding. The fact of 'giving oneself away' through service, stresses the element of continuity as a source of identity. Through the example of Miranda below I will show that 'controlling through feeding' can be read as a form of compliance to male authority which is part of a negotiation of gender power.

Female identity is centred on service not only in the context of motherhood or wifehood, but also of other kinship ties. When ties of marriage and filiation are absent, other kinship ties can acquire a quality of dedication and service and contribute to make a woman a 'real' woman.⁷

Motherhood in Mexico has a strong basis in Catholic imagery^{8bc}. Religious imagery provides an 'ideal' model of

⁷ Loreta, a spinster in her early sixties, is an active member of the group of the *Vela del Santísimo*. She is now living with an aunt almost ninety years old, who needs constant care. Loreta affirms herself to be a 'real' woman because she gave much *amor y servicio* (love and service) to her mother until she died and she is doing the same for her old aunt.

⁸ This imagery is weaker among non-Catholic fundamentalist groups. In Polanco there is a relatively large community of Jehovah's Witnesses (Fortuny 1991) and young women's attitudes to filiation is different from non-Jehovah's Witnesses. The example of Carla, a girl in her early twenties born and raised in a *pueblo* in Hidalgo and living in a 'foster' Jehovah family in Polanco, shows how her sense of personal worth arises from her dedication to Jehovah. She does not envisage herself having children because the time of the Apocalypse is coming soon and she feels the need to dedicate herself completely to Jehovah's cause. She is in love with a boy who assists in the temple. She would like to marry him and go to train in the Jehovah's Witness centre of 'El Belen' in Mexico City :

The world is changing, now is no longer the time to have children, instead it is necessary to build up something in the name of Jehovah.. the love of a child, I know, is a strong spiritual (experience), it can be there and it would not do me any harm, but one feels freer to serve Jehovah without children (see b endnote for Spanish quote).

Her idea is to realize herself as a wife:

To be fulfilled as a woman is to be a wife. The Bible says "a man will leave his father and mother and he will settle down"; a wife must act both as mother and father towards her husband - not by supporting him materially - but by sharing his problems...(see c endnote for Spanish quote).

Thus for Carla the importance of her life's project outweighs

woman and mother in Mexico (Paz 1959) though this embraces different qualities which range from abnegation and submission to valency and independence. It has been pointed out how, at a symbolic level, Catholicism carries a modern message of gender complementarity, in a society that privileges 'traditional' dominance and hierarchy between sexes. This appears as a paradox in a society which is male dominated yet places its highest value on the feminine (Melhuus 1992:240). The association of 'ideal' womanliness with the model of the Virgin (see *marianismo*) focuses 'traditional' female identity in the connection between motherhood and the morality of action (Norget 1991)⁹. This connection is illustrated by the cases of Doña Miranda and Doña Diana.

Miranda is a fifty-year old woman, who has been participating in the *Comunidades* with her husband for the last two years. She perceives in herself a quality of self-endurance which comes from being both a mother and a wife. Womanhood for Miranda is synonymous with 'total' dedication on her part to the 'good' of the family, and assuring that family members' actions lead to family 'harmony'.

(6.1.1.) Miranda was born in a village near Ameca and brought up in the Colonia del Sur. Her father died when she was very young and her mother remarried; her relationship with her stepfather was difficult. Miranda is married to Don Rodrigo and

her desire for motherhood. This raises the point (which cannot be touched upon in this thesis) of how fundamentalist group-membership generates changes in female self-perception.

⁹ But the opposite female image exists such as the 'Chingada'. She represents the passive mother who has been violated, the powerless mother such as the Malinche who helped Cortez to conquer Mexico and subdue its population (Paz 1959). Moreover, in denigratory jargon, expressions concerning motherhood - such as *vale madre...es un desmadre...una madriáda* (it is worth nothing..it is a total mess..it is a wicked thing) - refer to messiness, wickedness and unworthiness. Paz also associates 'el chingón' - the violating macho - with a state of closure and 'la chingada' - the violated, passive woman - with a state of openness (Paz 1959:70). In fact, when a woman is seen as open she is a failed woman (e.g.see *fracasada*, chapter V and below).

they have three children. Memo (twenty-two years old) is married with two children and lives with his wife Violeta in a semi-detached part of the house. Doña Miranda is an extremely hard worker and has a small stall which she runs with the help of her younger daughter in a permanent market. Her husband sells water door-to-door, but the bulk of the income of the household is gained by Miranda. The large plot of land where their unfinished house is built was bought with the proceeds of Miranda's home-based business of making tostadas (fried tortillas) which she ran for nearly sixteen years. She complains that her brothers and sisters used to visit and keep in contact with her at the time when she 'had money', but that they now dismiss her because the business is not going very well.

Miranda had a difficult youth as she had to help her mother because her step-father did not support the family. She married (already late) in her middle twenties; she had never thought about marrying before. The goal of her life was to take care of her mother who had become an alcoholic, sometimes getting into embarrassing situations in the neighbourhood. Nowadays her situation is not very different. Her husband, Don Rodrigo does not contribute to the household expenses and he expects her to fulfil her 'duties' of a good wife: to prepare food, do the washing, keep the house tidy, pay the bills...

Miranda has become the connecting link between Don Rodrigo and their sons so far as decision making within the family is concerned. These responsibilities - on the top of her business activities and the failure of her daughter-in-law's support in the housekeeping - put great pressure on Miranda. In fact she describes her life as being overwhelmed by a sense of obligation:

When Rodrigo asked for my hand, I did not want to marry, my idea was to take care of my mother. When I got married it was like going to the slaughter-house because there was no enjoyment...and he is very impulsive, so one has to do it [to have sex] out of obligation.^d

She is now critical of her husband. This is not so much due to a new awareness acquired through her experience in the CEBs but because he lied to her about his commitments. She discovered that he had another daughter before he married her and he never told his family in twenty-five years¹⁰. Miranda felt worried that his other daughter might claim rights on their property which she feels belongs to her children ('mis hijos') rather than to her husband. Moreover, she felt that Don Rodrigo had treated his honour differently from hers:

Before we got married he made inquiries about me but I didn't about him, I thought he was free of commitments [to other women]... he is very self-centred and selfish, everything for me, nothing for others, he has

¹⁰ 'Double' morality is based on male expectation of female obedience, deference and loyalty but not vice versa (Beneria 1987).

changed somewhat since he joined the CEBs, but he doesn't make the effort to understand the children yet, and now I can't see and serve him in the same way...^e

Miranda keeps the thread of the family together. She openly controls their daughter ('la tiene así') while she oversees their sons in a different way. Her daughter Loreta, sixteen years old, ended her *secundaria* and wishes to enter the *preparatoria*. Her mother would like to support her but the business in the market is not going well and Don Rodrigo does not contribute to school expenses. To worsen the economic situation Miranda had a partnership with a *compadre* who let her down financially. This has happened on other occasion because she is not able to discern the intentions of those who want business partnerships with her. Loreta helps her in the work and is not allowed by her mother to go around with friends of her own age. She dresses in school-uniform type of clothes and she is not allowed to use make up. Sometimes Miranda alludes to the difference between her daughter and her daughter-in-law, who became pregnant very young because 'su mama no la quidaba mucho'¹¹.

Miranda's sons Juan (nineteen year old) and Memo know that if they do *vagancias* (nasty things done by rambling boys) she will defend them to their father. The fact that she takes on herself some of the responsibility for their actions prevents them from opposing her will in matters of family decision making¹². Juan appears to be a very independent boy who likes to enjoy himself with good friends. Memo keeps more to himself but likes to get drunk with friends. Conflicts arise between Don Rodrigo and his sons especially because the father wants his sons to earn money and earn a living ('ganarse la vida') while both Juan and Memo like to go on *parrandas* (binges).

¹¹ Miranda does not like the family of her daughter-in-law, who live just opposite her house's back entrance. The family is a single mother household, and it is rumoured that the mother works in the Mercado de Abastos as the mistress of local business men. She attributes her daughter-in-law's early pregnancy (when she was just fifteen) not to her son but to the lax control her son's mother-in-law exercised over her daughter.

¹² Female protectiveness towards men reinforces the childhood dimension in adult malehood. In women's words men never grow up, they are eternal *niños* (children) even when they are married (LeVine 1993). Doña Chyayo, a woman involved in the CEBs, points out, as have many other women: 'When [the husband] drinks, I see him defenceless, I have mercy for him...since I married I have acquired another child'. (Quando él toma (her husband) lo veo endefenso y me hace pena...al casarme tube un niño más).

Rows often arise because of clashes between the authority of the father and the 'sloppiness' of the two children, which strains the 'harmony' of the family:

Juán worries me and here one cannot do whatever one fancies, one is part of the family and he has to move in harmony with it, otherwise he creates a heap of problems.^f(Miranda)

However, Miranda controls the family household in order to avoid direct physical confrontation between father and children; she does that by lying to her husband about the movements of their sons (e.g. she affirms that they came back at night earlier than they did, or that they earn more than they really do), and reporting to her sons only part of the comments that Don Rodrigo expresses about them. Because she has lost trust in Don Rodrigo she often suggests that she would be better off alone with her children. Don Rodrigo says in contrast, that he trusts her and could not see them parting.

The case of Miranda and Don Rodrigo exemplifies the importance of motherhood ties for women's self-identity and the 'peripheral' position of the father in the relation between parents and children. Don Rodrigo would like to impose his will on the sons and be 'tough' (*duro*) with them, but they listen to what he says without really following his advice. While Don Rodrigo is urged to show his authority in the house and that he is a 'hombre de veras' (a 'real man' which also means a good breadwinner, although Don Rodrigo relies heavily on Miranda earnings for the running of the house) the sons enjoy themselves with friends rather than bringing in stable earnings. Lewis (1961), narrating the relation between Jesús Sanchez and his sons Manuel and Rodrigo, showed that the authority of a father over his sons was absolute, and did not particularly change after they married. In the case of Don Rodrigo, on the contrary, the authority is to an extent illusionary. The fact that Don Rodrigo is not a good breadwinner is silently condemned within his own family. In practice the members of the family tend to respect his authority formally, but often follow his will only when it is shared by Miranda.

For Miranda, filial ties have become more important than ties of marriage. Miranda could imagine her life without Don Rodrigo. She has mentioned to me that she does not care if he stays with her any more: she thinks that she could even be

better off without him. Don Rodrigo appears outgoing and self-sufficient but his words often reveal that there would be a sense of loss if Miranda was not with him. He cannot see himself apart from her, because she keeps the thread of the family and the household together: she represents a vital part of his primary location of identity (Velez-Ibanez 1983)¹³. It seems that Don Rodrigo holds the 'appearance' of power, as against Miranda's 'actual' power (Roger 1975)¹⁴. Miranda is necessary to the functioning of the household while Don Rodrigo seems peripheral to it. She gives herself away and she is at the mercy of other people's needs, but this very service creates control over those who are served.

When the integration of her family comes under threat from Don Rodrigo's extramarital affairs, her prime concern is for the children; unconditional service to her husband is put under question. This does not happen through direct, open confrontation with him but through appearing submissive and silent, while with other women (from the *Comunidades*, in the

¹³ As I mentioned in the introduction, Velez-Ibañez uses an useful concept of 'primary locality' for a man which is composed by network relations constituted by female kin (e.g. wife and mother) and fictive female family (*comadres*, 'godmothers'): women, especially Julieta, Arturo's mother, and the *comadres* who form part of their network are of great importance in Netzahualcoyotl. They are the sources for Arturo's sense of the past and the present, as well as his sense of continuity...The primary locality, for Valenzuela, begins with the basis of his personal identity: women and the family (Velez-Ibañez 1983:154).

¹⁴ Roger's notion of female 'actual' power -and other studies which claim that women have power in Latin American society, because they have 'informal' ways to influence events - have been criticized for being limited to the control of household reproduction. In doing so they have not taken into consideration women's lack of access to extra-domestic resources and opportunities (Bohman 1984, Elhers 1991) and underplayed the presence of gender hierarchy (Jaquette 1980, Beneria 1987, De La Rocha 1988, Lamas 1986). My use of a notion of 'actual' power in Miranda's case indicates that Miranda controls her own income, but not the one generated by her husband and her power 'technique' rests on sideways 'diplomatic' manoeuvres to influence her husband's will, rather than direct confrontation.

market and with me), she expresses her discomfort about Don Rodrigo's extramarital affairs . In this sense, through silence before her husband and gossip with other women, she resists her husband's authority without changing her formal relationship to him (Herzfeld 1991). The focus of Miranda's self-identity is neither in separating herself, nor in having intentions different from her children and husband, but 'being connected' with and 'being the channel' for them.

Paz (1959) asserts that women are instruments for others because they maintain rather than create values and that 'womanhood is never an end in itself, like manhood is'¹⁵. I instead see female self-identity not as a unitary but as a relational subject. In other words, for women -like Miranda- identity is centred in being in relationship, not by having an individualized identity to which roles are attributed 'a priori' from being a mother. I agree with Logan (1988) and Radcliffe (1990) when they write that women in Latin America, who are becoming involved in grass root movements, do not claim rights as women 'per-se'; they value physical proximity, commitment and mutual aid more than autonomy¹⁶.

However the dynamics of filial and couple relationships are changing in urban life in Polanco, particularly because of differences between generations and changes in Catholic religious experience. For women who believe in 'traditional' religiosity (which I discussed extensively in chapter III) responsibility for action, and consequently the state of sin, are conditions that can be transferred between mother and children¹⁷. This is the case of Diana Ortega.

¹⁵ 'La femininidad nunca es un fin en sí misma, como lo es el hombría' (womanhood is never an end in itself, as manhood is)(Paz 1959:32).

¹⁶ I disagree, though, with Logan when she argues that because women's own needs as individuals are subordinated to those of family members this means that women are 'ignored, abused, devalued and taken for granted' (Logan 1988:353).

¹⁷ I do not make the deterministic statement that those boundaries are experienced by all women who profess traditional religiosity, but that, in the data gathered, there is a

(6.1.2.) Diana is extremely devoted to the Virgin and she still takes part in the annual procession of the patron Virgin in her village of origin in Michoacán. She has dedicated her life to raising her ten children. She married her husband because he 'se la robó' (stole\kidnapped her) when she was fourteen, not because she was in love with him. Her husband has had many extramarital affairs during their life (they have been sleeping in separate rooms for many years). These have cost him a considerable part of the family income, to such an extent that years ago Diana had to take up tailoring at home to pay the household bills.

In Diana's words, *all* her children have been very good and she is extremely proud of them. However, family relationships have been much more conflictual than she confides to outsiders¹⁸. At one point, for instance, her oldest son - who is now a successful business man in Polanco, and married with four children - made a girl (now his wife) pregnant, but he did not want to have anything to do with her. At the time he was living away from home and he was economically independent, working in his father's business. The unmarried daughter Maribel described how her mother had felt very anxious and 'sinful' for the oldest of her sons. She did not take communion for a few months (very unusual for a dedicated religious woman), and finally she spoke with Padre Hermilio, to explain that she was feeling sinful because her son refused to marry the mother of his child. Her mental state led to physical illness; and she fully recovered only when her son agreed to settle down with the mother of his child.

A similar bond of responsibility, sin and guilt exists with her daughters. Maribel, who is a professional woman, feels she would like to live her life in 'her own way', especially with regard to personal relationships. When Maribel became pregnant by a man who was already married with two children, her mother did not want her to go and live on her own in her flat in a colonia near Polanco. When I left the field Maribel was deciding to take this step - but had not done so yet.

Diana's case suggests that she felt *her son's sin to be her sin*, and there was no division between his and her sense of responsibility, no separation between her moral state and that

connection between a strong identification with 'traditional' Marian figure cult and the mother\children experience of moral continuity.

¹⁸ The wish to portray family life differently from what it is 'in reality' is a recurrent dynamic in Mexican family. Otero (1987) - inspired by Goffman - has compared Mexican family interaction to stage plays, because kin display emotions concerned with how things 'should' be, though they are also aware as spectators of how things are *de facto*.

of her son. She put up with her husband for the sake of the children, even though she was carrying on a virtually separate life from him.

However, Maribel rejects her mother's dichotomized view of women as 'mujeres honradas' (honourable women) or 'putas y amantes' (whores and lovers)¹⁹, but the fact that she might hurt her mother and cause her physical sickness permeates her close relationships with the other sex. The difficulty stating and following her will, when it challenges her mother's sense of responsibilities, shows that the possibility of moral transgression of a certain code of behaviour is infused with a sense of wrong-doing to her mother. Her confusion as she faces changes is due to the pressure of Catholicism on issues of sexuality and sin²⁰.

Thus 'traditional' motherhood rests on permeable boundaries between mother and children, and daughters who acquire experiences in different fields often challenge their mothers' self-perception as women. Mother/ children ties then are more important than the relation wife/husband, which, being seen as sacred in the eyes of God, may be maintained on account of moral and religious obligations.

¹⁹ Bohman (1984), in her study of poor urban women in Medellin, has pointed out that female solidarity among kin and among neighbours exists if women behave as 'respectable' women. If they do not, they can only be 'mujeres de la vida' (prostitutes) and suffer social isolation. She argues that female gossips help reproducing this dichotomized view of women, because the gossips function both as outlets for frustration with husbands and children and also 'as agents of social control and indoctrination' (Bohman 1984:286).

²⁰ Arizpe, in her study of Zamora's mestizo community, points out that young women are still subordinated to the status quo of gender hierarchy, because of the power of Catholicism in matters of sexuality and sin (Arizpe 1989:213-215).

6.2. ATTRIBUTES OF FEMALENESS: CHALLENGES TO 'MUJERES ABNEGADAS' (ABNEGATED WOMEN).

Challenges to the 'traditional' role of women emerge in the relations between older and younger mothers. The former have often been brought up in the *ranchos* and *pueblos* while younger mothers, brought up in the *colonia*, do not share the same ideas of sin and guilt and have different ideas about relations between men and women, child labour and mother/daughter-in-law relations.

Different beliefs about giving birth are recalled by women who have been brought up in the *pueblo* or *ranchito*. These often concern ideas of *second birth*. Giving birth is a 'second birth' for the mother.

Child labour is a second birth. Therefore women who have recently given birth should not stir, nor watch television nor do heavy work. If you touch the skin of a woman who has just given birth it is very soft and it looks rejuvenated..²¹ (Soledad originary of Tabasco, Zacatecas)

Women report that in the *ranchito*, during the weeks following birth, the mother used to rest from housework activities though, often, this custom is not respected in urban areas. A recently delivered mother should look after herself with special care.

People still believe that women who have recently given birth should not watch much television, should not sew in inadequate light, expose their shoulders to a draught, and so on. Somehow a woman's senses are considered to be weak, as are those of her child. Nonetheless, the physical experience of labour is considered to give women a quality of endurance and stamina. However, nowadays, young mothers often want to avoid the physical pain of child delivery, and caesarean is a widely chosen option among Polanco's young female population²¹.

The choice of a caesarean delivery by young mothers is

²¹ Attitudes to breast feeding are also changing for women in urban areas (LeVine 1993). Breast feeding is often substituted by an enriched 'Nestle' milk formula that women believe from television commercials to be more nutritious than breast milk.

criticized by many older mothers because they see a positive connection between female endurance and the experience of coping in child labour²². To opt for 'painless' delivery undermines the central 'rite' of womanhood. It has been pointed out that, in Latin American, gender imagery stresses suffering as a moral quality attached to chastity and motherhood, which gives strength and legitimacy to women, making them 'better women' (Melhuus 1992, 1993, Bohman:1984). Therefore it is important to make women's suffering visible and a subject for discussion (Mehlhus 1992:160), so that through suffering women become 'closed' (*cerrado*) and therefore more like men (Paz 1959).

Together with resistance to identifying with female suffering, a lack of continuity in female identity between mother and daughter-in-law has become visible. In low income neighbourhoods in Guadalajara many newly married couples go and live with one of the parents, in order to save for the construction of their own house. There is a slight majority of virilocal residence (Varley 1992); in these cases, the situation of the daughter-in-law can be difficult since she is in the 'in-law's' territory. The tension between mother in-law (*suegra*) and daughter in-law can be analyzed as a struggle for control over the husband/son, in a society where women obtain authority through their association with male figures (Roger 1975). The daughter-in-law becomes not only a competitive figure vis-à-vis the control of a central source of authority, but also undermines the motherhood principle of non-separation²³.

²² Emily Martin has pointed out that the increased number of caesareans in the United States suggests women's refusal to live in the lower part of their bodies. I do not have sufficient data to draw a parallel with this Mexican urban case, but the choice of a caesarean in this context could indicate a rejection of the mother/'sufferer' role as a base of motherhood identity.

²³ The relation between son and father in-law is different because men tend not to intervene in the same way as women in the organisation of the new household, and in Polanco there is no dispute about inheritance of land (or cattle) as may have

(6.2.1.) Blanca, a seventeen year old pregnant woman, has a very good relation with her mother-in-law - Lupita - who has been involved in the grupo de salud for a long time and used to participate in the CEBs (her son participated in youth CEBs with the Jesuits and, later in OCIP meetings before getting married). Lupita is a model of dedication to the family but also of understanding and openness; Blanca wants to live up to her mother-in-law's expectations by taking good care both of the home and of her husband, and thus to gain the respect of her mother in-law's family. What she reports about her mother-in-law hints at a continuity of feeling between mother and children:

Lupita brought up all her children well and now they are a very united family. I have great trust in her, for me she is the model of a mother...she told me one day "I love you because you love my son; if you did not love him I would not love you"^h

Since she was thirteen, Blanca dreamt of being called a señora. She feels privileged that her husband is paying so much attention to her and that she can 'trust' him, while many other women, she says, are mistreated by their husband.

Blanca's sense of being a woman is completely tied to being a good wife and a good mother, and her case shows how identification between mother and daughter-in-law develops around the figure of the son/husband. However, mother/daughter-in-law relationships do not always result in mutual comprehension and trust, and tensions often arise from unfulfilled expectations.

(6.2.2.) Violeta (daughter-in-law of Miranda and wife of Memo) is supported financially by her mother-in-law while her husband is often out of work or drinks away a good part of his income. Miranda does not blame Violeta for Memo's conduct, and together they have tried different strategies to make him stop drinking. Violeta, who has put on a lot of weight since her second pregnancy, stays in the house during the day but she does not do much of the housekeeping and she hardly ever washes the clothes of her in-law's family. Violeta complains she would like to get back to school and specialize in nursing but that her husband does not want her to study (she 'being more intelligent than him'). Her mother-in-law does not support her in this because 'she has to take good care of the

been the case in the ranchos. The pressure that newly-married men suffer concerns the fact that they have to show their capacity to support the family (they use the term *hacerla* (to make it)) and earn what the wife will redistribute and allocate within the household economy.

children before thinking about her training'²⁴. Miranda blames Violeta for being laid-back (*está floja*) in the household duties and attending carelessly to her children. Miranda traces this carelessness back to Violeta's family and her mother's lack of control, discipline and closeness to the children. As I suggested above, discussing Miranda case, Violeta's natal family is an example of lack of good motherhood and female respectability (in fact Miranda does not want Violeta's sisters to come and visit her house nor her grandchildren to visit them). Violeta's identification with her young children has not given her enough strength to cope well with the difficulties in her life because her husband Memo neither supports her in her aspirations nor takes her out anywhere. Violeta often spends periods of seclusion, (during the day when the others are at work) watching television and over eating.

The pressure on Violeta is three-fold: a difficult relationship with her husband, an expectation on the part of her mother-in-law that she should take care of the housework, and the scorned position of her own mother. Her own mother would accept her back on condition that Violeta ceased to have any relation with her husband, and focus on her children within a strictly-controlled social life (e.g. not going out with male friends). In similar Latin American cases it has been observed that increased economic pressure on low income households requires an increase in female income, which is often generated outside the home, delegating the pressure of household duties onto younger daughters, and daughters-in-law (Moser 1987, Gonzales De La Rocha 1988 and Chant 1992).

However for Violeta, none of these options enhances her ability to acquire skills and have an independent source of income, but the option that her in-law's family offers her - of being mother to their grandchildren - still guarantees her shelter and a minimal state of survival. Violeta is a woman of the 'new' generation who '*no aguanta tanto*' (does not put up with much). She would like to '*estrenar*' (show off) new clothes, go to parties, see female friends, somehow deny a

²⁴ Marriage can create patterns of 'deskilling' for young women (Beneria 1987:99) because it sacrifices the possibility of their professional development and the economic rewards that would derive from it.

condition of 'traditional' dedication to her children and home²⁵. Violeta's conflicts with her mother-in-law are about expectations of being a woman; the confrontations are about Violeta fulfilling the 'role' of careful mother and good housekeeper that Miranda expects of her as she has expected of herself throughout her life. Women receive support from other women, but only if they stick to established norms, and often different expectations may be left aside for fear of losing support both from siblings and affines (Bohman 1984:326).

Being a mother in a 'traditional' way is experienced as maintaining the core of family morality, and involves controlling and organizing the family network. But tensions over the control of the distribution of duties in the household, the care of children, and the aspirations of young girls to enhance their personal skills are at the base of inter-generational female conflicts within extended households.

²⁵ Moreover, Violeta missed part of her time of 'illusion' because of her early marriage and pregnancy and she entered directly into the time of 'reality'.

6.3. BE SUBMISSIVE, BUT DO NOT 'DEJARSE' (GIVE IN)

Although this section deals specifically with the relationship between husband and wife, this relation cannot be separated from the previous analysis of mother/children ties. As I have sketched out in the case of the *mujer abnegada*, one of the characteristics of motherhood/womanhood stresses submission and endurance in gender roles. These characteristics, though, also constitute women's strength and sense of moral superiority in relation to men²⁶.

An attribute of femaleness is the capacity to *no dejarse* (give in). *Dejarse* means literally to let go, in an extensive sense it indicates an action of surrender or giving in. The term is used, for example, to describe situations during which a woman undergoes physical or psychological distress but has still been able to provide her children with the opportunity to live in decent conditions. It suggests a situation of material or psychological uneasiness (e.g. violence) and the ability to go through the contingencies of daily life with the capacity to face the world in action. To say that a woman *no se deja* suggests she has the capacity to act upon hostile conditions and possesses a strength not undermined by obstacles in the social environment.

Women's strength then relates to the capacity *de aguantar* (to endure). The extent to which women *aguantan* can be a source of confrontation between older and younger generations, between women who strongly identify with 'traditional' values and those who do not. The fact that women '*aguantan más que los hombre y se dejan menos*' (endure more than men and give in less) implies that women perceive in themselves an *intrinsic strength in everyday life* which is stronger and of a different quality from that of men. Women state they have a quality of endurance, self-sufficiency and independence which they see as alien to men:

²⁶ Those apparently opposed female characteristic are not an either/or: 'the "weak" -or violated, vulnerable woman - and the "strong" - or morally superior woman - are two sides of the same coin, as it were' (Melhuus 1992:146).

Man is slower, useless, men feel secure if they rely on a woman otherwise they crack up, women endure more, they are able to find the way to go on...¹ (Elsa, mother of Susana, member of CEBs and MFC).

The fact that women cope with running the household while the husband has left or is not a good provider, contrasts sharply with a normative notion of male self-sufficiency. As I mentioned above, for a woman to marry is nearly always described as 'tener un niño más' (have another child), and if the husband has left, what many women complain about is the lack of his income support rather than his presence in the house (Elhers 1991). In fact Benería (1987) has pointed out that the major concern for low-income urban women in this situation is its consequence for their children's upbringing.

In Polanco one frequently hears middle-aged women complaining that nowadays young married women - with or without children - want to go out to earn a living. In their view this tendency shows women's inability to be good administrators, as well as their incapacity 'de estar al pendiente' (to be at the disposal) of other family members:

Nowadays people marry and within two months of marriage they are in an affair [with others].. girls now are not able to cope, they are weaker, in the past it was different, more was asked of us. The girls say: "I have run out of money", or that "my husband does not give me enough money, I am leaving him and changing him for another man and I am starting to work". They want to work to show off more and they do not take care of their children well.¹ (Doña Juanita)

For women like Juanita (whose case I discussed in chapter II) a married woman should be able to manage with what she receives from her husband. To go out to work brings shame upon the husband because it shows his inability to provide for her and for the family's needs and therefore, his incapacity as a breadwinner. In Polanco, as in rural mestizo communities, it is shameful to expose one's needs to the public eye: '"need" as a form of poverty is a private not a public concern' (Melhuus 1992:94).

Patterns of female and male consumption reveal differences. Women like Juanita bemoan lack of money to buy

children's clothes or better food for the family. They do not express the wish to buy things for themselves (and do not do so as far I could see) or to spend money in a way which is not beneficial to the household such as on new clothes, on eating out or going to the cinema, while younger mothers are criticized for holding on to their single life-style and consumption-pattern. Married men give some of their earnings to their wives ('el chivo'), but they keep part of it (often much) to spend with friends drinking, or with other women (e.g. *casa chica*, prostitutes). Young unmarried men spend part of their *raya* (salary) to dress smartly and to invite girls out. If a girl is taken out she will never expect to pay for food, drinks or cinema; in this sense girls are described as *consentidas* (spoiled), because boys have to pay for them.

Juanita's reported comment picks up on one gender contradiction present in a *colonia popular*. The economic crisis has brought women into the formal and informal markets in much higher percentages since the 1980s (Gonzales De La Rocha 1988, Chant 1992, Craske 1993b). But to work outside the house is considered shameful by some older women. Thus an increasing number of women in *colonias populares* as well as in the countryside (Brunt 1992) have developed sources of income through different activities inside the home. Those activities range from preparing *comida* (food), which is sold in little stalls outside the house, to the selling of a wide range of sweets, crisp potatoes, jellies or snacks from the front door (Arias 1982:174)²⁷ and from working as hairdressers in beauty salons, to the selling of *fayuca* (smuggled goods from United States) and other goods in demand. The success of these types of business depend upon the balance between 'multiple incomes' generated in the household (Arias 1982: 1974) and pressure upon women's labour due to lack of reallocation of household labour

²⁷ Clients come to the house for services, or the public is approached from the threshold of the house. The threshold then becomes a viable space which belongs both to the *calle* and the *casa*.

and domestic responsibility (Gonzales De La Rocha 1988) ²⁸.

In the past women used to be stolen ('se la robaban'), especially in the *ranchos* and *pueblos*. A man who kidnapped a girl was perceived to lack respect for her family rather than for the girl he stole; it was to her family, not to her, that he had to apologize. Older married women stress the fact that 'al casarte te toca la suerte' (when you marry it is a question of chance); women do not know the true nature of their new husband, so what happens to them after marriage is a question of luck. They also comment that younger women now want 'more sex', because they talk about sex more in terms of enjoyment than 'obligation'. Sex is what should be given to the husband in exchange for his protection (Bohman 1984:312).

Nowadays it is common to hear a different comment 'ahora las muchacha se roban a los muchachos' (nowadays the girls steal the boys) or another expression where the verb used has changed ('se fueron' (they went)) to suggest a common will. Younger women hope - as their mothers did - that their lovers 'no cambie en el matrimonio, que se quede así' (he will not change with marriage, that he will remain as he is), but being married for them is not so much for them 'aguantar mi marido' (to cope with my husband) but rather 'buscar alguien que la haga para tí' (to find someone who will do it for you).

Today, more than in the past, married women's worth rests on their capacity to be attractive, which enhances their husband's image in social life²⁹. Female chastity can be used

²⁸ Female-generated income may constitute savings for an unexpected expenditure (e.g. medical consultations and medicines) or become the 'stable' income of the household in periods of the husband's unemployment. Grown-up children living at home should contribute to the expenses of the household until they decide to marry and put money aside for the new household and the costs of the wedding ceremony.

²⁹ Collier (1986), analysing the changes in a southern Spanish rural village which shifted from labour to capital-intensive agriculture, points out a shift in women's self-perception from an 'idiom of inheritance' to an idiom of 'personal choice'. The polarity between an unmarried state of 'divertirse' (enjoyment) versus a married state of 'obligaciones' (duties) is 'no longer a cultural opposite'

as a strategy to 'withhold their (female) sexuality in order to trap a man into marriage' (Collier 1986: 106). Women would like to see themselves more as choosers, and competition in love-matters exists between women over a man rather than just between men about a woman³⁰.

Differences in female patterns of consumption, allocation of time to family life and attitudes to marriage have been read as revealing factors in the processes of social and identity changes in Mexico (LeVine 1993). LeVine, studying urban women in Guernavaca (Morelos), argues that younger women do not fulfil themselves just through taking care of their children and husband but they want to care more for themselves within a family structure (LeVine 1993:204,205). My findings also show that many younger women are more focused on issues concerning their persona, their acts of choice and responsibility, and seek more support from their husbands. However, I disagree with LeVine, in her interpretation of this process as a part of a general movement towards modernity, involving a more autonomous self, in that women take care of themselves as 'women' rather than as mothers, daughters and wives. This presupposes a notion of unitary self, which is driven towards autonomy and independence. In the following sections I argue instead that the process is not so clear cut, and that women may or may not challenge the creation of their

(Collier 1986:104). The 'idiom of personal choice' is identified by Collier as a discourse about individualism, voluntarism and rationalism whose usages vary widely according to historical circumstances (Collier 1986:106).

³⁰ Similar findings about enhanced female competition and a 'more passionately active search for men' have been observed in low income areas of Cali, Colombia (Browner:1982:76). Browner, discussing a comparative case between working class women in San Francisco (*latinas*: of latin origin) and in Cali, has observed that the stress given to mother/children and husband/wife relationships varies. She argues that a stress on female self-sacrifice and 'Marian purity' - with privileging filial bonds- (in the San Francisco's case) and the enhancement of personal image and appearance - stressing marital relations -(in the Cali's case) are not ends in themselves, but ways in which women gain economic and social rewards.

own identity through the presence of men. Lewis' ethnography of the Sanchez family shows some aspects of the complex impingement of modernity into the discourse of female self-identity in Mexico³¹. The ambivalence - between idiosyncratic personal experiences of gender relations and the fixity of representations of such relations - is manifested through resistance, which takes the form of personal life-crises involving a sense of loss as well as negotiation and 'appropriation' of attributes of maleness.

³¹ Modernity speaks through Consuelo - the daughter of Jesús who tries to resist the characteristics of female submission and the use of weapons of seduction. As a consequence she is perceived as selfish and presumptuous because she would like to separate herself from her family, which she associates with the realities of poverty, violence and lack of education. However, she is unsuccessful in doing this. Franco, using a psychoanalytic explanation, argues that Consuelo's self-consciousness is derived from realising she is a 'decentred subject' because she would like to turn into a man and stand against her father's power and censorship (Franco 1989:173). It is this same consciousness of subalternity which 'forces her into the feminine position' (Franco 1989:167), and later pushes her to acquire the ethnographer's power (as she writes her autobiography for Lewis). I agree with Franco that women who are 'trapped' into, and act as a vehicle for, a discourse of modernity often face an either/or choice: either obeying the rules of social practice to obliterate their difference or giving up their selves altogether.

6.4. NI SOLTERA, CASADA, VIUDA, O DIVORCIADA (NEITHER SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED)

The struggle to adjust self-perceptions to 'traditional' gender representations in everyday actions is a central theme in gender relations in Polanco. A woman can be single, married, unmarried or abandoned, and gender vocabulary indicates that women are defined through their formal relation to a man (or his absence), but men are not. For instance, the attribute *quedada* is used both to define a spinster and a married woman who has been left with her in-law's family because her husband has gone to work in the United State. *Quedada* connotes a state of passivity, of 'having missed a chance' and having been left behind. Men are not addressed as *quedados*. Of a mature unmarried man people say that 'el vive todavía con sus papas' (he still lives with his parents) or 'es un solterón' (he is a mature single)³², which implies that their condition is a result of active choice (and it may potentially change in the future).

Married women - engaged in the *proceso cambio* of the CEBs or not particularly close to either 'traditional' or 'new' discourses - may resist seeing themselves as *mujeres abnegadas*. The degree and self-awareness of resisting a female 'traditional' role varies. The tensions arising from loss of identification with the 'traditional' female gender role, and from disappointment in experiencing the change from 'illusory' to 'real' time can be expressed in the search for an extramarital affair, in rejection of 'traditional' duties of wife and mother, or in a bodily sense of self-loss.

(6.4.1.) Antonia is a woman in her middle thirties, who participates in the *grupo de salud*, but is not involved in the work of the CEBs:

Because if something does not interest me, it does not interest me, so after a while I get bored and there [i.e. in the CEBs meetings] one has to comment upon the theme [under discussion].^k

Her childhood was very difficult, marked by much poverty and poor health. The family came from Zacatecas, and her mother was in charge of the family because her husband drank and mistreated her. Antonia married young 'to get out of the unbearable situation'; her

³² *Soltero* means single, *solterón* is its augmentative.

husband 'me quiere mucho' (loves me very much), but she did not marry him for love. After marriage when she was working in a factory, she started to suffer from depression which continued well after the birth of her two sons:

I was working in the factory and eating badly, I started to have high blood pressure, and marriage was not as I had imagined.. I thought it [marriage] was going out a lot[having a good time]. There was no pressure, I was the one responsible, I started to behave badly with my husband and to beat my children...it was depression and sadness and anxiety ..I felt I was going to die.¹

At the time she did not do her housework properly nor attend to the children well. Consequently she was taken by some neighbours to see a brujo (witch doctor) who started to see her regularly. An extra-marital relationship developed while she was recovering from her state of depression³³. Gossip reached her in-law's family and her husband. However, her husband wanted to forgive her for what she had done; Antonia recalled that her wish to come back to him involved a mixture of self-abnegation and a letting go of the (sexual) burden of the relationship:

I told him: "let me remain as a servant for you and your children, but leave me the freedom to have my life and you to have yours". But he told me that he did not want that, and that he loved me, and he asked me in what way he could change.²

But identification as a *mujer abnegada* did not last and a similar extramarital relation developed later with a doctor who has his consultancy in Polanco, but whom she left a few years later because he took up with another woman. She now feels inadequate in the lover role but not comfortable in her wifely responsibilities either:

I do not want to serve just a man, I want something more serious, lasting longer and stronger. For me to marry is not to serve a man.³

Antonia's mother is totally dedicated to her family but has developed problems of *los nervios* (nerves) having to cope with running the household without help either from her husband or grown up children:

For her, just the fact of criticizing somebody is a great sin...for her to say 'Ay! that man is very handsome' is a sin or shows a desire for him. I do not agree [with her] about many things, for her it is necessary to obey a husband, and I do not agree with it. She is exhausting herself and she supports her husband.. and the children still living in the house do not help her, they should make their [own way in] life! But they depend upon her, and she feels an obligation to them, because they are her children, but she should take care of herself more.⁴ (Antonia)

³³ She neither believed that her recovery was due to his 'magic potion' nor to her being closer to God and having expelled the evil eye. She knew that the 'magic potion' consisted of injections of vitamins and she believed them to be the real cause of her recuperation.

Moreover she complains about her mother that:

I am really bothered that she wants to change me. Every time I go home she tells me " if you are coming home wear other clothes and don't talk in this way". She wants to control my way of dressing and way of being. I am not like that, I accept people as they are, as I know them, I am interested in feelings, not what people see or say...^P

In Antonia's case the tensions between her expectation of pleasure in marriage and 'traditional' patterns of gender interaction emerge in the relationship with her mother. Antonia believes that a woman has to 'cuidarse más para ella' (take more care of herself) and therefore to draw a different set of boundaries and responsibilities vis-à-vis her children and husband which imply also their greater involvement in the running of the household. She also states the need to express herself in her own way within her family and community.

Antonia challenges the assumption that women's identity is related to the presence (or the fact of the absence) and the protection of a man (however, Antonia claims to 'appreciate her husband's love' though she also knows that - being with him - she may fall again into depression). Moreover, Antonia and her mother believe that illness can be generated by domestic difficulties, which emerge from economic pressure and tensions in gender relations. Antonia's story (like Soledad's below) reveals that while women identify with female qualities such as 'controlling through feeding', total self-abnegation supporting husband and children, and generalized notions of continuity of responsibilities between mother and children, such qualities are also resisted. This resistance manifests itself through life-crises and the sense of a loss of self-identity.

6.4.2. RESISTANCE TO ABNEGATION: THE EXPERIENCE IN THE COMUNIDADES.

Active participation by women in the Comunidades may involve challenge to existing gender relations, but that challenge is seen in continuity not in opposition to their gender roles within the family (Logan 1984). Women attending meetings of the CEBs often have to face the opposition of their

husbands (Toussaint 1990)³⁴. Various marriages have been brought to the edge of breakdown following the woman's participation in the CEBs movement (Caldeira 1987). Men's participation in the CEBs does not bring effective changes in gender/family relations especially at the level of the redistribution of labour in the household. It has been argued that CEBs discourse tends to 'de-gender' women in the name of the communality of poverty and identification with the *pueblo* (Mohr 1992:13). In this CEBs are different from 'traditional' religious groups where women members are addressed only through 'traditional' female/gender images and roles (e.g. *Vela de Santísimo*).

Through the cases I discuss below, I argue that CEBs provide some tools for lay women to negotiate gender relations, for religious female agents to acquire male qualities, and for male agents to withdraw from some aspects of maleness related to sexuality without being open to accusation of deviancy.

(6.4.2.1.) Soledad is a woman in her early thirties who is actively involved in the life of the *Comunidades* in the *Anunciación*. She is married to Leo, a specialized engine-worker, and they have two children, Rosa (eight years old) and Carlos (four years old). She defines her husband as 'suave' (soft) but she was not in love with him when they married. Soledad is originally from the *Tabasco Zacatecas* and is the oldest child of a family in which the father died young. Before marrying at the age of twenty-three, Soledad was already (and still is) a vital centre of the organisation of her family. Everybody - her mother included - asks for her advice or veto in personal and family decisions, about the allocation of resources, the organization of family gatherings, medical proceedings, counselling on major buying and so on. She has had many different jobs (basically in medical consultancies), even throughout the early years of marriage, and she ceased formal employment only with the birth of Rosa. Soledad stresses the fact that when she was working she wanted to help those who were in need and could not afford medical treatment. She defended everybody ('defendía a todos') and observed people's needs to such an extent that she was sacked for making one business unprofitable for her

³⁴ One of the obvious points which women are very careful to respect is the 'ritual' of feeding the husband when he comes back from work (LeVine 1993, Lewis 1959). Women active in the CEBs arrange their activities to be sure to be at home when their husbands come back. Husbands become very annoyed if their wife is not there to serve them food.

employers.

Nowadays, Soledad successfully practises hairdressing in the house, sells *fayuca*, as well as organizing *rifas*³⁵ (communal saving schemes) with the neighbours. Soledad pays all the bills of the house, while Leo gives her a set allowance for the food and the children's needs. In the meantime she has been able to save to buy a new refrigerator and a new sofa for her nearly completely-decorated house. Her '*curiosidad de vivir*' (curiosity about life), and her independence, combined with the experience of the CEBs, made it difficult for her to fit into expected female self-definitions which depend upon the presence (or presence of the absence) of a male figure:

Here the majority of women want to be in love and get married, but for me it was not so. I knew Leo and I trusted him greatly as a friend, but I did not want to marry him...because of that I did not accept him, after we married I felt very low. It was very difficult for a year... every time he came close I felt nearly sick, but I did not understand what it was. The problem is that I do not want to see myself as single, widowed, divorced or married. I overcame this repulsion with the birth of Rosa, then there was a reason to be together.⁹

For nearly two years Soledad worked intensively in the activities of the parish. She was a coordinator of a group of *Comunidades*, and she was in charge of the *grupo de salud*. These activities so absorbed her time that often she came back home only shortly before her husband with no food prepared for dinner and carrying the children half asleep. Her husband did not express his resentment for a long time, but then he started to ask her to let go of some of her commitments. At one point he wanted to sell the house and change neighbourhood in the hope that Soledad would concentrate on her family responsibilities and, especially, on the care of her children:

For a long time I longed for something more: a person cannot live just for the day. So when the sister invited me, I joined the *Comunidades* without knowing what they were but I started to hold more responsibility - especially with the health [group]. Many meetings were at night. So I came back home at ten o'clock with the children half asleep to prepare food for Leo who came back at eleven...I was neglecting family matters and the household because I felt that what we were doing was important and Leo did not understand what it was about. During that time we felt apart and he did not understand why I was so involved in this [the CEBs]. I reached the point of thinking of leaving but then I thought of the children and what would have happened to them, not really to Leo...I have always thought that I would share Leo [with other women] one day, I do not see him as my property. But it is better that Leo has not got involved with the *Comunidades* because they absorb so much time, and someone has to earn a living for the household.¹

³⁵ *Rifas* are a form of saving with two objectives: firstly a commitment to saving because it implies an obligation towards others, and secondly an avoidance of keeping the money '*sin ocuparlo*' (without using it), and being tempted to spend or lend it to siblings or friends (Arias:1982).

When Soledad eventually dropped out of some activities in the parish it was because of personal conflicts with the priest (see chapter III), rather than on account of pressure from her family. However, at that time Leo supported her and gave her the strength not to give it all up. He advised her to carry on with the activities of the grupo de salud even if she was no longer supported by the parish structure. Now Soledad is still working with Mauricio and his part of a regional/national network in the salud popular. Moreover, she has also started to give consultations, and neighbours as well as people from other colonias come to her for herbal remedies. She receives many visits at home from both men and women who come for small favours or just for advice. Soledad loves to be of help, and she points out that her experience in the Comunidades has given her more confidence to deal with different people, and has taught her how important human support is.

During her time as an organiser of the CEBs, Soledad reached such a point of 'enthusiasm' for the proceso de cambio that:

My mother and my sister asked me whether I was well or whether I had gone mad.³⁶

The conflict with her mother had an impact different from that with her husband. Her mother complained she did not have time for the family and that she started to have 'ideas raras' (strange ideas) about the government and about what people should do as Catholics. In contrast, the resistance of Soledad's husband to her involvement in the CEBs came from her failure to fulfil her family obligations rather than any dispute over her ideas about social mobilization and society.

Soledad's experience in the Comunidades of the Anunciación, although personally sad, has triggered off a process that she cannot ignore. She feels she has 'empesado a despertarme y ya uno no se puede dormir' (I have started to awaken and now it is not possible to go back to sleep): this awakening involves a process of self-empowerment, of being able to bring about changes in personal (as well to a certain extent communal) life³⁷. Soledad eventually found a compromise between her duties towards her husband and family, but she has

³⁶ Changes in women's perception of the world as a consequence of activity in social movements are explained in terms 'of bodily failure', which can be manifest in mental or physical illness (see also examples in Craske 1993b:129). In this sense women's 'deviancy' is translated into bodily deviancy.

³⁷ Similar cases have been reported by Logan (1989:352) and Craske (1993a, 1993).

remained aware that she could eventually grow apart from him.

The experience of the **Comunidades** has fortified her sense of independence, and of being able to see herself separately from her husband, her parental family and the life of the parish³⁸. However, at another level this independence has entailed more connectedness with people outside her own family, and a stronger commitment to form new social relationships in which she can be of help. Events in the parish have also helped her to appreciate some of Leo's qualities - his capacity to be a support rather than an obstacle - and provided her a space for reflection upon everyday life/gender relations.

Resistance to identification with female images can also be among the motivations for religious conversion. The choice of religious life may broaden a woman's self-perception because, in religious terms, female qualities need not conform only to 'traditional' Marian, submissive qualities, but may also be formed through the 'appropriation' of male imagery and qualities³⁹.

(6.4.2.2.) In the words of the sister Carlota of the order of Santa Teresa (Carmelites)⁴⁰ it is possible to identify the characteristics of a woman who has grown

³⁸ Padre Nemo's resolution - to ostracize Soledad from the activity of the parish - has been accepted by some leaders of the **Comunidades**. Gossip has circulated among the coordinators of the CEBs in the Anunciación that Soledad is having an extramarital affair with Mauricio, her co-worker, in the **Comunidades**. Condemnation of a woman who has been too independent is often expressed in gossip about her alleged sexual infidelity.

³⁹ This also happens to a category of women otherwise the antithesis of religious sisters: prostitutes. Arnold (1977), for instance has observed that prostitutes (in a Lima brothel) can challenge existing representation of female and male sexuality. They put on 'pose' during sexual intercourse (while married women would not) in ways which reveal them as sexual, active beings against a dominant myth of women as asexual and submissive.

⁴⁰ There is a group of eight sisters living in Polanco. They have a house of novices where they live with a **madre superiora** and a few older sisters. They work actively in the **Comunidades** but are completing their secondary studies at the same time. This was the only house for sisters in Polanco in the early 1990s. Until the beginning of the 1980s there was another

up in a pueblo. Carlota was born in Tabasco, Michoacán, the oldest of seven brothers and sisters, and her parents separated when the children were young. Early in her life she assumed part of the responsibility of her dead father as breadwinner of the household. Before entering the congregation she worked and studied at the same time. After a personal revelation she planned to enter the seminary without informing her mother. There used to be, and there is still, a contradictory parental attitude (especially on the part of the mother) towards daughters who join religious orders. A nun enhances the status of her family, but as a daughter cannot be a source of help and support for her parents in old age.

Carlota describes part of her life and conversion:

The first two years of training were very difficult, but I resisted because my character is not to step back at the first difficulties, I learnt this in my house where I was like a father. I have a strong, resolute and valiant character...^t

Talking about her experience of men and women in Polanco:

Men trust me because I don't disclose what they tell me to other people, but I don't like people to know that I am a sister, there are people that don't confide in me because of this...women are more resistant to pain, they have fewer outlets than the men, men go out with friends, man is weaker morally and in everything else.^u

And about the different path of being a women in a religious order:

I admire Saint Teresa for her freedom, I liked her maleness, she was not dependent upon men, she owned herself, she took what she liked, she wanted to go back to the poor and give away all her wealth...through this path I have gained part of my self-realisation and the attainment of my objectives of being able to construct a new society without compromises in a more profound way than through marriage. I don't see the choice not to have a family and to be in control of what I earn as lost possibilities, because there are other forms of personal growth, and the money situation is the same here: I used to give everything to my mother and then she gave some to me, and here it is the same, they give me what I need, but I don't have my own money.^v

In Carlota's perception the fact that women take on male characteristics and act out male responsibilities within the family does not make them more masculine but instead it enhances 'el ser mujer' (being a woman): the ability to cope in difficult situations, the characteristics of 'valencia' and resistance to pain. 'Ser mujer' is not acquired and maintained just by being born female, rather it is a quality which can be weakened by certain types of behaviour, (for instance talking

group of sisters (Reparadoras), who actively helped the Jesuits. They then pulled out of the colonia after pressure from a part of that order which is not inclined towards the CEBs form of evangelical action.

too much and gossiping). In the eyes of believers, religious sisterhood guarantees exemption from these 'negative' characteristics of women. Carlota is then a woman but she is also a 'different' woman.

The implication of Carlota's words about St. Teresa is that women are not 'dueñas de sus persona' and that a family can limit forms of self-realisation. For young novices in Polanco, sisterhood represents a characteristic of womanhood which transforms biological filiation into social filiation, and family boundaries into religious community boundaries.

Nonetheless, the images invoked by Carlota's superiors involve a different kind of idealized image of the female. Their focus is more upon the aspects of service and compassion of the Virgin and Sor Teresa. The emphasis on **valor** (courage) and **lucha para los demás** (fight for the others) is stronger among younger sisters than among their superiors. In the dynamic of the novices' house in Polanco there are tensions between younger and older sisters. The former identify with **la lucha del pueblo** by wanting to dress like poor lay people (e.g. wearing **guaraches** (open sandals), carrying **morrales**) and being, to a certain extent, critical of Vatican conservatism. The latter lay more stress upon women's religious morality and subordination within the religious structure as a central point in religious female experience. To a certain extent, therefore, the activities of the **Comunidades** affect not only lay but also religious women's self-perception and point to a negotiation of male and female attributes.

6.5. MALE EXPERIENCE IN THE COMUNIDADES

The **Comunidades** provide a forum both for lay people and clerics in which to analyze their dissatisfaction and potential changes in personal and collective life. The choice of religious life for a man may be born from a feeling of inadequacy and an unwillingness to fulfil a 'traditional' male role, which itself is defined in contradictory terms (see

chapter V)⁴¹. It is also a space for non conformity without being open to accusations of deviancy.

(6.5.1.) Horacio a Jesuit in his mid-twenties, was one of the last novices to work in the OCIP in Polanco (after Padre Rafael pushed for a separation of the work of the dioceses in the Comunidades from the work of the Jesuits based in the OCIP, see chapters II and III). Horacio was born into a middle class family of Guadalajara and from early in life he saw priesthood as his 'career'. For him to be in the Company of Jesus implies an awareness of lay married life, without having to engage in, or appear to deviate from it:

During the seminary the conditions of life of single people, of those who have taken vows as well as of the diocesan priest, the religious and married man, are discussed during the [spiritual] exercises, and everybody is interested in the subject, because if we were not interested...there are no homosexuals in the Company [of Jesus]!^W

Horacio feels he would have not been a good husband and that this was a major reason for entering the seminary. In joining the Company of Jesus, he has realized that his 'projecto de vida' (life project) could not have been possible in married life, and that sexuality is a potential threat to the pursuit of such a project:

..If someone [novice] has girl problems (bronca), often it is easy to drop out, he may get involved with a girl, but it is temporary, so if he leaves he throws away a whole life-project that he has had...I discovered I am not made for marriage, I am made to have a more personal and holy experience, more committed than marriage permits us...and moreover, that one [e.g. himself] realizes that he [in the sense of I] has a character that relates well to people, but I am enclosed, so I have not the qualities to form a familyyou [in the sense of I] like more to be in contact with people, and maybe this would be possible in married life, but one [in the sense of I] prefers the consecrated life^X (Horacio).

Thus Horacio's experience shows that married life is perceived as a limitation of contacts between oneself and society at large. Moreover religious experience is more 'personal', it does not divert someone away from the deeper meanings of his life, which are rooted in the experience of the Comunidades. Close relations with the opposite sex are described as potentially conflictual (see his use of the term bronca - which means a problem in need of being sorted out). However, withdrawal from sexual encounter can only be justified

⁴¹ A married man who shows that he is not 'looking out' for women other than his wife, may be addressed by friends as a **mandilón** - a word which indicates a weak person controlled by female power. At the same time, if a man betrays his wife he is judged - especially by other women - as a **descarado** (brazen) or a **sinvergüenza** (shameless person).

in term of developing a sacred life ('una vida consagrada'): otherwise it could be read as a sign of homosexuality. For Carlota, religious experience involved women's negotiation of acquisition and expression of male qualities; for Horacio the religious vocation is discussed in terms of the ability to withdraw from what is considered the centre of male experience (sexuality), but without losing a male identity.

For lay men, the **Comunidades** trigger off ideas of change at the level of the group which only partly filters down into daily family interaction. Their talk about 'el proceso de cambio' (the process of change) in terms of family, community and national changes does not always correspond to personal changes within their own family.

(6.5.2.) Mauricio, a man in his early thirties moved from his place of origin in Aranda (near Colima) to Guadalajara four years ago (see chapter III). Padre Nemo called him in from Arandas and offered him work both in the building construction of the parish and in the organisation of the **Comunidades**. Mauricio holds a 'global' vision of the world:

Everyone is part of a family, of a colonia, of a nation and the entire world. Everything is part of everything and life is in everything. God is where life is and where there is life there is no evil, so in the CEBs it is recognized that there is life in everything.^y

And a view about changes to be taken :

The faith which endures longer is the faith about the teaching of everyday life. If faith doesn't manifest itself in activities as a part of everyday life, in the economic, political and ideological, a person is like a fish out of water. It is necessary to understand that we are whole and that it is necessary to improve life, beginning with the economic. If the person, the family, and the community are not interconnected by faith, faith is superficial. A person defines himself as Christian but he does not improve his family situation....^z

Mauricio used to work in building construction, but now has no regular job. He is married to Lola, with three children and, without his wife's approval, stopped looking for work and started to gain money through playing and singing in the buses. However, their economic situation became so difficult, and he was so laid-back, that Lola decided to look for a job in a factory. He did not prevent her because her work tided over the financial difficulties of the household⁴². Since he was turned out of the parish's

⁴² Many husbands in Latin America prevent their wives entering the labour market, because it suggests their inability to be good breadwinners in the eyes of the community (Craske 1993, Chant 1992).

activities Mauricio prefers to dedicate time to the group of salud popular, at city and regional levels, rather than looking after the household economy. Lola describes him as 'se hace conciuado' (which means, [not literally] to hold back, to avoid taking responsibilities) because she has had to become the breadwinner of the house and rely a great deal on her old mother-in-law (who has been living with them for a while) for housework duties and children care.

Mauricio's **machismo** - expressed through his control over Lola's behaviour - has been strong throughout their marriage. He has never encouraged Lola to speak in public meetings and seldom lets her take part in those meetings without him (which in practice means - when his mother is not around - him looking after the children). He is devoted to the ideals of the **Comunidades** but he does not allow any negotiation of gender roles to take place in his own family. Moreover, Mauricio does not like Lola to dress other than in bulky women's dresses and **guaraches**, and she is not allowed to go out alone without the children. This control over his wife's appearance has remained unchanged from the early years of their marriage.

Prolonged activity in the **Comunidades** has made Mauricio talk in a more sensitive way about issues of social and gender equality, but his everyday commitment to family life has decreased throughout his involvement in the CEBs. Mauricio has been very keen to inspire people to think about different socio-political and theological issues and to organize discussions and events, but he has not escaped the common male pattern of lack of 'responsibility' towards family life. His case, like that of Rodrigo (Miranda's husband), shows the difficulties in applying 'el proceso de cambio' to family relations. Therefore, for some male CEBs leaders, acquiring 'new' religious values does not preclude persisting in 'traditional' gender behaviour and division of labour within the household.

6.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the multiplicity of gendered self-perceptions and the contrasts which arise between these perceptions and the stereotypical fixity of gender representations. These gender representations portray women's 'real' time - after marriage - as an experience of suffering, self-abnegation and hard work. But gender relations in Polanco show that female and male attributes can be negotiated as they are not only based on relations of domination but also in resistance and compliance. Different and often contrasting qualities of femaleness and maleness (e.g. Carlota's 'varonilidad' and 'ser dueña de su persona' and Miranda's unconditional self-sacrifice for her family) coexist as aspects of female self-identity.

Male identity is linked to the attribute of being a good bread-winner and to the experience of the paradox of male sexuality that simultaneously demands the fidelity of one's own wife, and the infidelity of one's neighbour's wife.

Female identity pivots around attributes of endurance and resilience in everyday life and on 'being a channel'- a link between different members of the family for the allocation of resources as well as for the transmission of knowledge.

However, these attributes are questions of degree rather than kind. 'Traditional' women find their strength in patterns of submission to their husband, suffering for their family kin and holding moral responsibility on behalf of their children. Paradoxically they also resist - through compliance and gossip - these patterns. Younger women still recognize themselves in motherhood values, but experience a continuity between 'enjoyments' and 'obligations' (Collier 1986), and wish to enhance their personal skills. They do not identify with female attributes of self-sacrifice and suffering; for this, older women depict and criticize them as wanting to hold on to such aspects of the time of 'illusion' as a single life-style and patterns of consumption.

Resistance to 'traditional' female aspects can be manifested in experiences of sickness and psychological crisis

(e.g. Antonia and her mother) or in a process of self-empowering through active militancy in the CEBs - when a woman is not only the link and the 'connecting' point between her family members, but also a linking agent in a wider set of relations which take place in the community (e.g. Soledad and Carlota). Then resistance takes various forms that impinge at different levels: at the level of representations, social actions, psychological states and the body itself.

So, if at a symbolic level it has been argued that female 'weak' aspects of vulnerability and submission to male figures (**machismo**) coexist with 'strong' aspects of female moral superiority (**marianismo**) - being two sides of the same coin (Melhuus 1992) - this chapter has explored how those aspects may coexist, be resisted or transformed in women's experience and everyday language. Though whatever forms resistance takes, female identity still rests on values of physical proximity and mutual care rather than autonomy and self-sufficiency.

^a.Aguantan todo lo que el marido les haga, y viven para sus hijos.

^b.El mundo va cambiando, ya no es para tener hijos, pero hay que levantar algo en cuenta de Jehovah..el amor a un hijo yo sé que es fuerte espiritualmente puede estar y nada me va a hacer (in correct spanish: tiene cabida y no me hará ningún daño), pero para servir a Jehovah uno se siente más libre sin niños.

^c.Estar realizada como mujer es ser una esposa. La biblia dice "dejará el hombre a su padre y a su madre y se asentará"; una esposa tiene que hacer el papel de madre y padre con el esposo, cuidarlo, pero no mantenerlo!, compartiendo sus problemas...

^d.Cuando Rodrigo me pidió yo no quería que nos casamos, mi idea era de cuidar a mi mamá. Cuando me casé fué como ir al rastro porqué fué nada de gozo...y él es muy impulsivo entonces uno tiene que hacerlo por obligación..

^e.Antes de casarme él hizo investigaciones sobre mí pero yo no, yo pensaba que él estaba libre de compromisos....El es muy encerrado en su egoísmo, todo para mí y nada para los demás, ha cambiado algo desde que entró en las Comunidades pero todavía no hace el esfuerzo de entender a los hijos. Y ahora yá no puedo verlo y servirlo de la misma manera.

^f.Juán me da mucho a pensar y aquí uno no puede hacer lo que quiere es parte de la familia y se tiene que mover en armonía, si no crea un montón de problemas.

^g.El parto es un segundo nacimiento, por esto, la mujer recién aliviada no tiene que fijar la vista, ni mirar la tele, ni hacer trabajos fuertes, si uno toca la piel de una después del nacimiento del niño es muy suave parece rejuvenecida..

^h.Lupita sacó adelante bien a todos sus hijos y ahora son una familia muy unida. Yó le tengo mucha confianza, para mí es un modelo de madre...ella un día me dijo " yo te quiero porque tú quieres a mi hijo, si tu no lo quisieras, yo no te querría".

ⁱ.El hombre es más torpe, inútil, los hombres se sienten seguros si se apoyan en una mujer si no truenan, las mujeres aguantan más, encuentran cómo salir adelante.

^j.Ahora la gente se casa y a los dos meses andan de novios..las muchachas de ahorita no aguantan, son más débiles, antes era diferente se nos pedía más. Ellas dicen "ya no tengo, que mi marido no me da dinero. Yo lo dejo y lo cambio por otro y me pongo a trabajar". Quieren trabajar para aparentar más..y no cuidan bien a los niños.

^k...Porque si algo no me interesa no me interesa sino después de un rato me aburro y entonces uno tiene que opinar sobre el tema.

^l.Trabajaba en la fábrica y mal alimentada, me empezó a subir la presión, y el matrimonio no era como yo me lo pintaba, yo pensaba que era puro paseo. Nada era forzado, yo era responsable,

empezé a ser mala con mi esposo a tratarlo mal y a golpear a mis hijos.. era una depresión y una tristeza y una ansiedad que me sentía que me iba a morir.

^M.Yo le dije: "déjame estar aquí como una sirvienta para tí y para tus hijos, pero déjame la libertad de hacer mi vida y tu de hacer la tuya". Pero él me dijo que no, que él me quería, y me pidió en qué podía él cambiar..

^N.Yo no quiero servir solamente para un hombre, yo quiero algo de más serio, que sea más duradero, más fuerte. Para mí, casarse no es servir al hombre, es algo de diferente...

^O.Para ella simplemente el criticar a una persona es un grandísimo pecado, para ella decir, "Ay! qué guapísimo es este hombre" es pecado o el desear a un hombre. En muchas cosas no estoy de acuerdo, para ella hay que obedecer al marido, y servirle porque es su esposo, yo no estoy de acuerdo con esto. Ella se friega mucho y soporta a su marido y los hijos todavía en la casa no la ayudan, que hagan su vida! Pero ellos dependen de ella y ella siente que tiene una obligación con ellos porque son sus hijos, pero ella tendría que cuidarse más para ella.

^P.A mí me molesta mucho que ella quiera cambiarme, cada vez que voy a la casa (her mother's house) me dice " si vienes a la casa ponte otra ropa y no hables de esta forma". Quiere dirigir mi forma de vestir y mi forma de ser. Yo no, yo acepto las personas como son, tal como las conozco, me interesan los sentimientos, no lo que la gente ve, habla...

^Q.La mayoría de las mujeres aquí quieren enamorarse y casarse, pero para mí no fué así. Yo conocía a Leo y lo estimaba mucho como amigo, pero no quería casarlo...por ésto yo no lo aceptaba, después que nos casamos me bajó mucho el ánimo. Fué muy difícil por un año, cada vez que se acercaba me daba casi asco, pero yo no me comprendía a mí misma. El problema es que yo no quería verme, ni soltera, ni viuda ni divorciada, ni casada. Superé este rechazo con el nacimiento de Rosa, ya tenía una razón para estar juntos.

^R.Desde mucho tiempo tenía la inquietud de algo más, una persona no puede vivir con el puro vivir al día. Por esto cuando las monjas me invitaron yo me metí a los de las Comunidades sin saber lo que eran pero empecé a tener más responsabilidad también con lo de salud. Muchas reuniones eran en la noche. Así que regresaba a las diez con los niños casi dormidos para preparar la comida para Leo que regresaba a las once..me fuí olvidando de las cosas de la familia y del hogar porque me parecía muy importante los que estábamos haciendo, y Leo no agarraba la onda de todo esto. Durante este tiempo nos distanciamos, él no podía comprender porqué andaba tan metida en esto. Llegué a pensar que me iba a ir pero pensé en los hijos, qué iba a pasar con ellos, no en Leo...siempre he pensado que un día voy a compartir a Leo, yo no lo veo como algo de mi propiedad. Pero es mejor que Leo no se haya metido en lo de las Comunidades porque esto absorbe mucho, y alguien tiene que ganar para el hogar.

^s. Ya mi mamá y mis hermanas me decían si no me sentía bien y si ya me había vuelto loca.

^t. Los primeros dos años en el internado fueron difíciles pero me quedé porque mi carácter no es hacerse para atrás a la primera, esto lo aprendí en mi casa donde era como un padre. Tengo un carácter fuerte, decidido y de valor..

^u. Los hombres me tienen confianza porque no voy platicando con la gente sobre lo que me confían en todas partes, pero no me gusta que la gente sepa que soy religiosa, hay gente que por esto no se confía conmigo... las mujeres son más resistentes al dolor, ellas tienen menos desahogo que los hombres, los hombres salen y van con los amigos, el hombre es más débil moralmente y en todo lo demás.

^v. Admiro a Santa Teresa por su libertad me gustaba su varonilidad, no era dependiente de los hombres, ella era dueña de su persona, tomaba lo que le gustaba, ella quería regresar a los pobres y desechar todas las riquezas... yo con este camino he ganado parte de mi realización personal y de mis objetivos que tengo de poder lograr una sociedad nueva y sin compromisos más a fondo que con el matrimonio. Yo no considero perdidas las demás posibilidades que no he elegido, como tener familia y disponer de lo que gano porque hay otros medios para la superación personal, y la situación del dinero aquí es igual: yo daba todo a mi mamá y ella me daba, aquí es lo mismo, me dan lo que necesito, pero no tengo dinero propio.

^w. En el noviciado se discerne en los ejercicios los estados de vida de soltero, de consagrado, como diocesano, como religioso, como casado y a todo el mundo nos llama la atención porque si no nos llamara la atención... no quieren maricones en la compañía!.

^x... Si uno tiene una bronca con una muchacha a veces es fácil que uno se salga, puede ser que se enreda con una muchacha que ya es pasajero, y se sale y se echa a perder todo un proyecto de vida que uno tenía... yo descubrí que no soy para el matrimonio, soy para tener una experiencia más personal, más sagrada, de una entrega de servicio más total, que el matrimonio nos impide.. y aparte que te das cuenta que no tienes un carácter que te relaciona bien con la gente pero me siento encerrado, como que no tengo las cualidades para formar una familia... te gusta más contactarte con más gente, y a lo mejor sería posible de casado, pero uno quiere un vida consagrada.

^y. Cada uno es parte de una familia, de una colonia, de una nación de un mundo entero. Todo es parte de todo y la vida está en todo. Dios está donde está la vida y donde está la vida no está el mal, por esto en la CEBs hay que reconocer que hay vida en todo.

^z. La fe que se queda más es la fe en las vivencias de cada día. Si la fe no se desencarna en la vida diaria, en lo económico, en el político en lo ideológico, la persona es como un pez fuera del agua. Hay que comprender que somos un todo y que hay que mejorar

las condiciones de vida empezando por lo económico. Si la persona, la familia y la comunidad no están interconectados en la fe, la fe es superficial. Uno se dice cristiano pero no mejora su situación familiar..

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS: 'AGARRANDO LA ONDA'

7.1. 'TRADITIONAL' AND 'NEW' FIELDS FOR IDENTITY

This conclusion summarizes and pulls together the major threads which have run through the chapters to explain the ways this study pursues and expands approaches at the base of anthropological investigations of urban Mexico.

At the beginning of this thesis, I discussed how urban Mexican studies have evolved around two axes of analysis. Originally, the axis of tradition and modernity - focusing on micro-level adaptation and the transformation of people in the urban environment - was a main focus of inquiry. Structural relations of production and consumption, examining how formal and informal economic activities and their repercussions in household relations, became the focus of analysis of the life of the 'poor'. The claim made in this thesis - of the need to study the self and identity in the bridge between micro and macro levels of analysis - is not completely new. Various studies have applied Bourdieu's notions of habitus and symbolic capital to life-style and to negotiations of power and prestige in the everyday life of poor *colonias populares* (Mahar 1992), or connected particular life-histories to the historical and economic conditions in which they have developed (Murphy 1991). However, these analyses are still few.

In order to bring together micro and macro levels of analysis I have investigated the ways in which notions of the 'traditional' and the 'new' are constructed by agents in everyday interaction. This axis is concerned with how people map the world around them and negotiate power and knowledge, rather than with revealing 'objective' laws of social interaction. Notions of the 'traditional' and the 'new' are much more complex than modernisation theories have assumed. 'Traditional' values have been associated with ideas of backwardness and the legitimisation of the status quo (Kemper 1977; Foster 1979) as well as with ideological perpetuation of class divisions under expanding capitalism (Arizpe 1989). But their construction in social practice and language, and their

relevance to the process of people's identity has been an understudied subject of study. The 'traditional' (opposed to the 'new' Church) and faith (opposed to the scientificity of homeopathy) are labels which are used by particular groups of actors to define groups other than themselves. Their use, rather than showing particular cultural characteristics, indicates particular relations between people and groups. Notions of 'progressiveness' and 'backwardness' are intentional choices in the language of specific agents - such as of religious and medical 'elites'.

Nonetheless, terms such as 'traditional' and 'new' Churches - used by those involved in the CEBs - also mark important differences. These concern issues of responsibility, agency, and community. CEBs believers are active actors in the construction of the realm of God, within a Church which is not a physical building but a community of people. Community values reflect a challenge to individual responsibility which, rather than being subjected to the will of the religious hierarchy, has to be taken into one's own hands. Responsibility means choice: choice of actions and for action. God is not the eternal punisher, but that which can be encountered through movement rather than through isolated contemplation. In 'traditional' oriented groups, encounter with God is often expressed through metaphors of physical proximity, as a sensory, almost physical, experience. In the CEBs perception, instead, God is seen in terms of its shaping of human life in all its forms. While, in the most 'traditional' groups, God may be a feared judge, in the CEBs, people are taught to experience God primarily through formulating a morality in action, a capacity for self-judgement and self-reflection.

It is clear that CEB experience and beliefs offer a potential for consciousness because they develop an awareness of one's own actions and their representation in language. However, the ways in which these principles are preached by diocesan clergy and Jesuits may encounter forms of resistance on the parts of the members of the CEBs and parishioners at

large. Such resistance exists not only at the level of the different boundaries of the self (e.g the community rather than the family) and at the level of the need for self-reflection, but arise from difficulties concerning the control of parish politics, the production and circulation of knowledge and, therefore, the legitimisation of particular aspects of the identity of the self and groups. 'Labelling' calls for a 'close up' on who perceives and represents those labels. Claims about the nature of religious and medical beliefs have to be analyzed through agents' positions in the construction of knowledge and the power that legitimisation therefore confers.

Creation of a 'new' tradition such as the ritual of girls' fifteenth birthday¹, and 'new' ways to celebrate traditional rituals - such as the Virgin's processions (chapter V) - point to different forms of consciousness. In its attitude towards these rituals the 'new' Church emphasizes the need for 'new' meanings and contents of a religious and social nature. As I have discussed in chapter V, social meaning implies a detachment of the form of the ritual from its content and, by making this distinction, CEBs oriented catechisms tend to create a hierarchy between the latter and the former. However, many parishioners associate experience of the ritual of the *quince años* not only with individual and family mass consumption, but also link it subtly with their identity and prestige in the neighbourhood. Furthermore the celebration is an exclusive occasion on which the girl is at the centre of attention and when her individuality apart from her family is emphasized, and not only her identity as a member of a family. Moreover, the performance of the ritual is an experience which has great emotional resonance. Impinging upon a girl's memory, the celebration is important for the construction of a girl's self-identity. The form in which the *fiesta* is performed indicates aspects of girl's character and personality, as well

¹ Unfortunately there is very little material written about this girls' celebration so there is no way to compare this ritual, as it has developed in Polanco, with other celebrations in similar neighbourhoods.

as a girl's relationship to her extended family and her degree of subordination to parental guidance. It also shows the status of the family in the neighbourhood or in the village of origin.

A girl's adolescence often means increased responsibility vis-à-vis family duty, but not increased autonomy.

Responsibility for one's own family does not equate with responsibility for oneself. On the contrary, the stronger the family ties, the weaker is autonomy in social interaction. This is because a girl's 'good' moral intentions can be led astray if brought into contact with dangerous male, 'bad' intentions. So 'growing up' has different gender implications for boys and girls. Women often tend to leave their childhood behind through having to take care of somebody else's childhood and needs (e.g. brothers, sisters and close kin). Their space for interaction becomes more restricted as they grow up. As children they can play with their friends in the streets, but after the **quince** (often even before that) they have to behave differently as the quality of physical and social space changes. Open space (e.g. the street) is not somewhere to hang around in, but a place to be crossed with a purpose (women should cross it only to go shopping or to visit friends). As adults, women can occupy the threshold, from which they often organize their little businesses or from which they may - when older - sit and watch the life in the street go by, and possibly gossip about it.

A girl's time of 'illusion' reveals itself to be a period of 'suspended disbelief'; older women affirm that a woman's life is a life of suffering and betrayal by, and abnegation to, the husband. Younger women resist this condition either through their active engagement in the life of their community or through illness, in which case the body becomes a locus of resistance. However, challenges to 'traditional' womanhood are not issues of kind but degree, because younger women continue to find their identity in the nurturing role and in being a channel for family relations, though at the same time often aspire to improve their skills and education.

Boys and men, however, can hang around the street, and behave 'irresponsibly' when, being like 'children', they fail to provide adequately for their family. They may become **vagos** but still be taken care of by their mother or wives - without losing their maleness. Being **vago**, is a denial of 'belonging', rather than a denial of masculinity. In Polanco, active experience in the CEBs has a great effect on men's consciousness of the state of society and the community they live in, but it has a weaker effect in challenging existing gender relations in their households.

7.1.1. CONSCIOUSNESS AND NARRATIVE

Experience in the **Comunidades** has an important effect on people's use of language and therefore on their consciousness, becoming aware of symbolic as distinct from literal interpretations of the Bible is a vehicle of increased consciousness. In the **Comunidades**, people learn that the Bible is to be interpreted in the light of one's own experiences. Thus its interpretations may become a metaphorical language for the reading of one's own and the community's life. But the act of interpretation and the creation of a communal narrative also reveals difficulties and contradictions as in the case of the multifaced notion of **pueblo**. In the case of some religious rituals '**pueblo**' enhances a rhetoric of communality, but its semantic outcome also generates feelings of specificity (see chapter III).

CEBs-inspired consciousness is connected to inwardness. However, inwardness is not reached through contemplation as is the case of the group of the **Vela del Santísimo**, which through the practice of adoration, creates a contact between human and divine agency. Inwardness is explored through a pattern of understanding of - rather than identification with - the manifestation of divine and human agency in the social world. Some parishioners who had or have been taking part in 'traditional' and 'new' groups of the Church perceive continuity rather than polarisation between those forms of worship. This is because the two experiences offer narratives

for the self which are not necessarily in contrast but may even become complementary. Narratives of the genesis and evolution of one's own life and the life of a community, provided by MFC and by CEBs, show more continuities and common traits than differences.

Continuity can also be inferred between distinct medical figures - the homoeopaths and the **curanderos** - whose medical practice is portrayed as very different in kind (by the homoeopaths themselves). Continuities between different medical practices are interpreted, by patients, in elements of faith and in practical results. They do not stress the 'scientific' validity of such medical practices and they combine them in different phases of diseases. Those who emphasize discontinuities - between a 'new' and a 'traditional' knowledge - in narrating their experiences, tend to be those people who also have to legitimize their professional activities or their particular leading place within an organized group.

Consciousness is also revealed by experiences of learning during the process of migration. Experiences of ontological insecurity and nostalgia coexist with experiences of social and personal empowerment. Moreover, these experiences are not fixed in time because the quality of the past changes with the experience of the present. In order to study people's mapping of the world and its effects on identity, the thesis has therefore explored some of the representations of migration in people's lives. Rather than enquiring about the causality of migration, the thesis has investigated ways in which migration affects people differently even when they are in similar socio-economic conditions.

7.1.2. RESPONSIBILITY AND FAILURE

Responsibility in social interaction is another key element in the definition of the self. The thesis has explored responsibilities at the level of community, society, and family - levels which can become interlinked and sometimes difficult to separate.

Chapter IV analyzed responsibility and allocation of blame in medical practices in Polanco that are 'alternative' to or, better 'complementary' to allopathy. Explanations of disease centred on personal sin and distance from God coexist with explanations focused on unjust social structures and exploitation by some people of others. In the first case responsibility relates to the condition of one's own soul; in the second to the capacity to acquire organized and useful practical knowledge - derived by methods used in **pueblos** and **ranchos** - to counteract exploitation. The former explanation stresses the potential of disease as an opportunity for the awakening of the soul and therefore as a means of personal redemption; the latter, instead sees disease and ways to act upon it (through sharing knowledge in the community) as a form of social redemption.

However, individual and interpersonal responsibilities for actions are not always clear-cut. This is particularly evident in mother/children relations. 'Traditional' women experience a continuity of responsibility and morality of action between themselves and their children, and conflicts of morality may be expressed via the body through disease (e.g. Diana and the mother of Antonia). This sharing of responsibility indicates a continuity of identity between mother and children, and, therefore, the specific boundaries of motherhood. In cases of family conflicts, the interests of the children come before the interests of the husband (e.g. Miranda), because children rather than husbands are often perceived, by women, as 'being there' for them even in old age. Betrayal committed by the husband may be expected, but not by children. This is probably one of the reasons why, in a society where emotional and practical support of close kin is at the base of one's own identity, the importance of filial ties can be challenged only as a matter of degree but not in kind.

Failure is another area which permits one to understand social 'norms', or how, and on which occasions, norms can be negotiated. In Polanco, ideas of responsibility and shame crop

up constantly in everyday life, showing the different and often contradictory values of human worthiness and failure. Failure seems strong in two gender-specific conditions. One is the male condition of being a *vago* (to which I have already referred): the other is the condition of *fracasada* for girls.

Pregnancy out of wedlock brings shame on a girl and her family, but ostracism by the parents normally lasts only until the birth of the child. In fact, becoming a mother out of wedlock can be recognized as a regaining of status if the girl focuses exclusively on maternity rather than showing interest in relationships with men. If maternity is asserted and sexuality denied, single or abandoned mothers can still gain social respect (Melhuus 1993: 251,252). Pregnancy does not prevent the celebration of the ritual of the *quince años*, which enhances female purity and the female body as an unbroken vessel (see Tania, chapter V). In this case, the 'reality' of sexual relations is 'suspended' throughout the performance of this ritual which symbolically portrays an opposed 'reality' about those relations. This supports the point that the performative experience of ritual is not secondary to the content of the ritual - as CEB-inclined catechism stresses. For many in Polanco, both are equally important.

7.1.3. THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF MICRO AND MACRO ANALYSIS

In this last section I want both to summarize why a focus on the self and identity can bring together micro and macro analysis, and to present their mutual interconnection around notions of power, knowledge, prestige, as well as worthiness, failure and consciousness.

In the introduction, I pointed out that some anthropological urban studies in Mexico have used a 'Culture and Personality' approach and looked at the socio-psychological adaptation of migrants (Kemper 1977) or of the inhabitants of small villages which have been swallowed by city expansion into urban life (Díaz 1966). Others have focused on the socio-economic characteristics of the marginalisation of migrants - in shanty settlements - within a capitalist society (Lomnitz

1977), and their role in the division of labour in reproducing such a structure (Escobar 1986; 1987), or have looked at the cognitive mapping involved in the construction of neighbourhood/community in more consolidated settlements (Logan 1984). The former have focused exclusively on the level of individual action as the articulation of community and society, dismissing diversification, inconsistencies and contrasts in such levels of action. The latter - to different degrees - have also dismissed such diversification at the micro level, pointing out a generalized mechanism of solidarity for survival, or acknowledging diversification only at socio-economic levels.

This thesis has tried to investigate identity from the point of view of the interconnection between micro and macro analysis, arguing that macro analysis alone - such as a focus on the formality and informality of labour forces - does not explain diversities in everyday practice satisfactorily, and therefore, fails to explain issues of choice, responsibility, status and prestige which shape this level of experience.

The case of people's identity in Polanco - with particular reference to the part of its population which is involved in the parishes and in their activities - shows that these levels of analysis are interconnected and that an exclusive focus on one of the two limits the multiplicity of the ethnographic encounter. People's choices of disease treatment cannot be seen apart from the quality of the services provided by the IMSS, ISSTE, SSA, but this is not enough to understand why some people then turn to and choose between a group of *Medicina Popular*, a *curandero* or a homoeopath. It is important to understand beliefs about individual and social sin, redemption and faith to comprehend different choices; and it is equally important to study who differentiates these types of practices, and within which language.

Identity and aspects of the self, related to the experience of the CEBs, imply different interconnected levels of analysis. CEBs principles and practice - which have effects on people's self-perception, consciousness and group identity -

cannot be seen separately from the histories of the two parishes: Polanco's social mobilisation in the 1970s and 1980s, the confrontation with municipality bodies, and the complex relation between Jesuits, diocesan priests and Guadalajara's archbishopry. Nor can it be separated from the life histories of the two priests who took up the leadership of the parish of the Anunciación at different times, the different groups which they have promoted, and the personal conflicts that have arisen in such relations.

Analysis of sexuality and gender exploitation should also be examined at micro levels. In the case of the fifteenth birthday celebration, it is important to understand how and why this feast is or is not celebrated among different families and how this choice points to different family relations, religious beliefs, and family status. The symbolism of the feast cannot be separated from performative aspects and from relations of power, knowledge and prestige within and between different families and between lay and clerical agents.

Final, micro analysis of gender relations in Polanco shows different forms of gender resistance to 'traditional' women's roles, which are expressed in gossip, body language, psychological crisis, as well as in participation in grass-root movements such as the CEBs. The different case-histories discussed in the text give some indications why certain women choose some types of resistance rather than others. The narrative of the self - which is also constituted by these choices - is what gives continuity, and a moral direction between what one has become and where one is going.

7.2. SELF AS PROCESS IN POLANCO

This thesis has investigated some of the different levels which contribute to the construction of the self and collective identity in social practice in Polanco. We can infer that at those multiple levels people make different claims about the nature of the self and of collective identity². Those claims are more or less explicit, depending on the relationship between the knowledge - granted by those claims - and the exercise of power which they confer. Throughout the multiplicity of levels, there is a common idiom, despite each being semantically complex. This is the idiom of oscillation and pluralism between the 'traditional' and the 'new'. 'Traditional' and 'new' elements are intertwined in representations and experiences of past and present life in the city, the *pueblo* and the *rancho*. Pluralism of those elements is what also characterizes Church discourses, and the plurality of health seeking choices between different etiological systems shows oscillation and coexistence rather than linear evolution. 'Traditional' and 'new' elements are polarized by some actors in everyday interactions, though others do not draw on such polarisation but perceive their integration and coexistence.

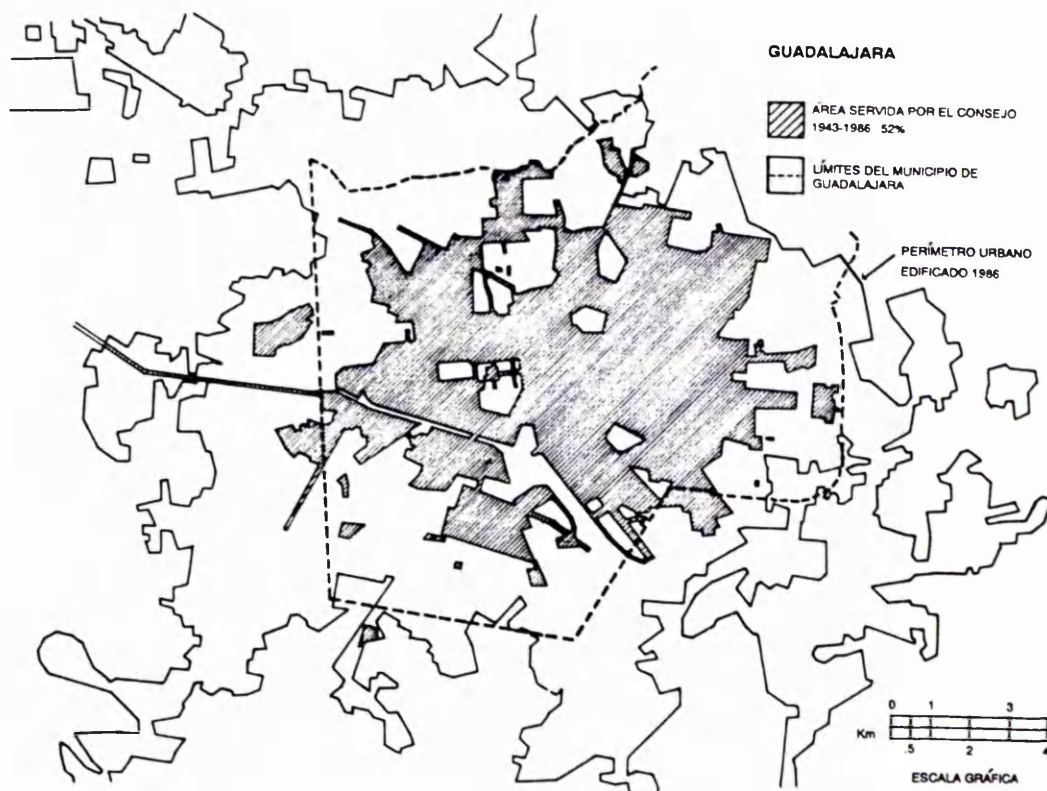
So a 'clear-cut' psychological portrayal of the self in Polanco or a generalized description of life styles of interactions and 'front regions' of acceptable codes of conducts (Goffman 1959) cannot grasp the multiplicity of levels and negotiations, some of which have been discussed in the thesis. It is rather a question of '*agarrar la onda*' (understanding the wavelength), the flow of the moment in which the actors are involved, rather than of fitting identity into rigid definitions. Self-knowledge and identity cannot be separated from the intentionality of agents and from their sense of responsibility and commitment in action. Self-identity is therefore relational (Velez-Ibañez 1983) and constructed between subjects. Thus self and identity processes

² I wish to point out again that this thesis does not look at the unity of the self, the theorisation of which belongs to theological discussions and experience of the spiritual realm.

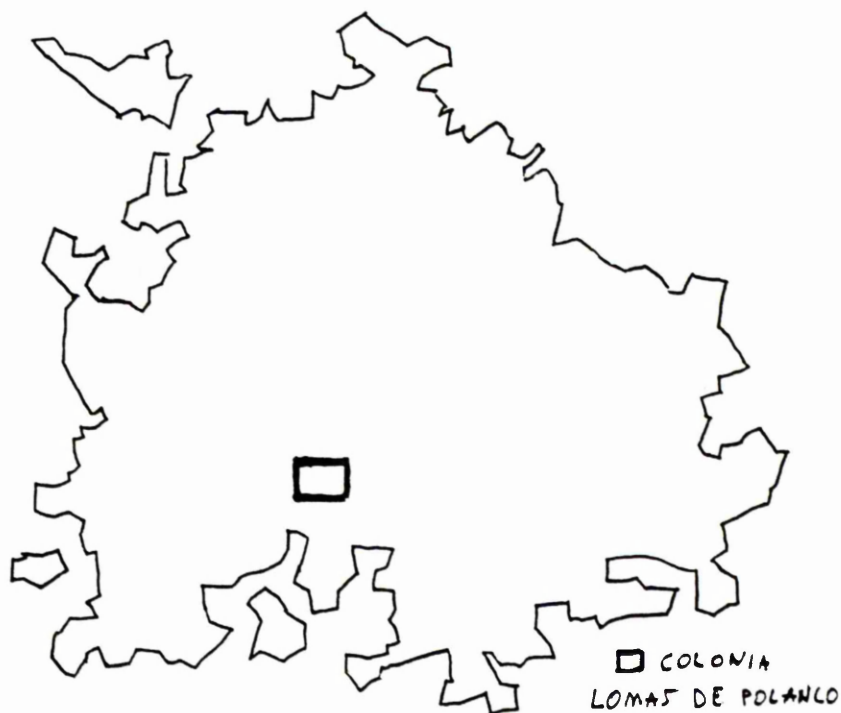
in Polanco emerge from dynamics of belonging, connectedness, moral continuity, interdependence, physical proximity, and performative experiences - and their interconnections - rather than from experiences of autonomy, self-sufficiency and introspection.

An 'essentialisation' of self and communal identity are often interpretations made by specific groups of people. The process of legitimisation, the regularisation of homogeneity, and also the diversification of homogeneity have to be taken into account in the process of the formation and maintenance of self and communal identity (Moore 1975, Bourdieu 1977:86).

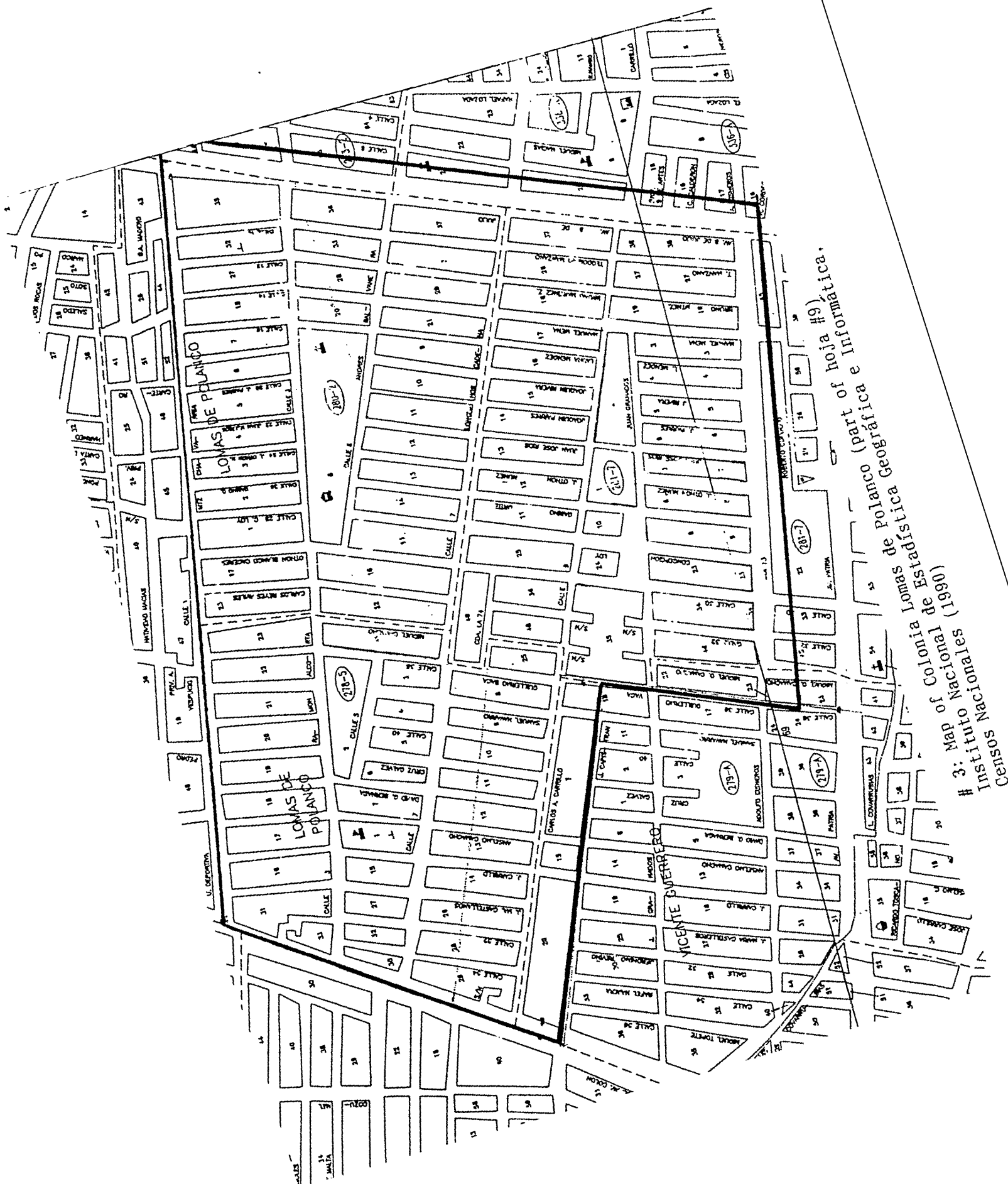
The ways in which people draw continuities between differently 'labelled' experiences and the ways in which they interpret 'new' experiences through 'traditional' language and also transform 'traditional' language itself, show how the process of identity formation and maintenance is not an ensemble of statuses - a static phenomenon. It points more to personal and group differences, resistances, and interpretations which constitute a complex process, a movement within language of temporal and spatial metaphors.

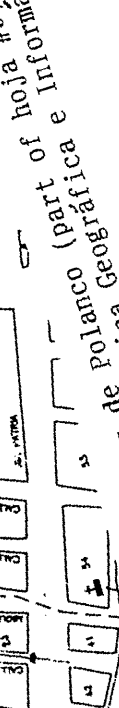


1: Map of urbanisation of Guadalajara (1987) from Vazquez (1987:175)

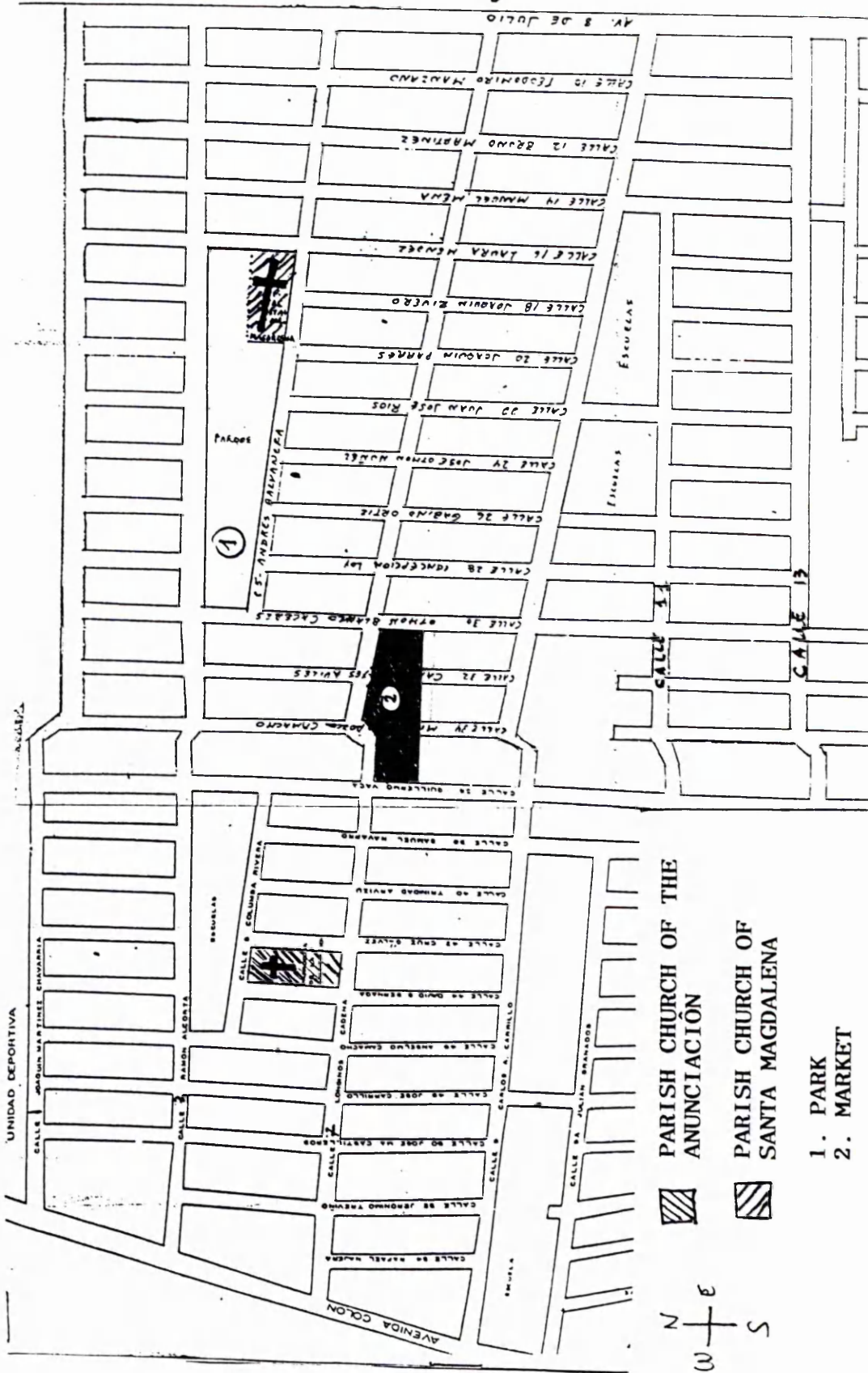


2: Reproduction of map of Guadalajara (hoja #9) Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geográfica e Informática, Censos Nacionales (1990)





← CALLE SIETE



4: Map of Colonia Lomas de Polanco with key locations (1991)



5: View of the Park - 'El Mono' - in front of the parish of St. Magdalena.



6: Beto in his grandmother's house



7: Beto's grandmother in her kitchen



8: Quinceñera in the Church of St. Magdalena

APPENDIX B

TREE OF LIFE

Salud

*Liberación, conciencización * Servicio,
convivir* Aire puro, servicios públicos* Vivienda
adecuada * Agua * Buena Higiene * Salud en manos del
pueblo * Medicina Popular y natural: Herbolaria,
Masaje, Fitoterapia, Magnetoterapia,
Reflexología...* Fe, confianza,
esperanza*

Vida

* Democracia y
organización popular
* Ayuda mutua
*Cambiar la estructura
*Conciencia

* Solidaridad * Hermandad * Compartir lo que
conocemos * Tierra y medios de producción en mano del
pueblo *

(Leaves: HEALTH. *Liberation, consciousness raising *Service,
living together * Clean air, public services* Good housing
*Water *Good hygiene *Health in the hands of people *'Medicina
popular' and natural medicine: Herbalism, Massage,
Aromatherapy¹, Magnetotherapy², Reflexology *Faith, trust,
hope * LIFE

Trunk: *Democracy and popular organisation* Mutual help *Change
of structure

Roots: *Consciousness *Solidarity *Brotherhood *Share what we
know* Land and means of productions in the hands of people).

¹Aromatherapy is the use of plant essences (extracted through
an alcoholic process).

²Magnetotherapy uses magnetic forces (emitted by particular
metals) to equilibrate magnetic fields in the body.

TREE OF DEATH

Enfermedades

*Amargura * Propaganda extranjera

* Casas farmacéuticas * IMSS, ISSSTE * Cólera *

Enfermedades de los nervios * Odio * Drogadicción

* Alcoholismo * Alimentos 'Chatarra' * Falta de servicios

'sanitarios * Anemia * Bichos * Falta de amor *

Anticonceptivos * Injusticia, desconfianza

* Ignorancia

Muerte

* Gobierno *

*Control de medio
de comunicaciones *

* Capitalismo (papá
Estados Unidos)*

* Dominación

subalterna *

* Bajos salarios * Acaparadores de riquezas

* Explotación * Falta de servicios básicos

(Leaves: ILLNESSES *Bitterness * Foreign propaganda * Chemical industries *IMSS, ISSSTE *Cholera * Illnesses of the nerves *Hate *Drug addiction,* Alcoholism *Junk food *Lack of health-care services *Anemia *Worms *Lack of love *Contraceptives * Injustice, mistrust * Ignorance DEATH

Trunk: Government * Control of media *Capitalism (Daddy United States) *Domination/subalternity

Roots: Low salaries *Monopolizers of wealth * Exploitation *Lack of basic services).

APPENDIX C

The theoretical principles of homoeopathy are distinct from allopathy. Homoeopathy derives from the Greek words 'homoion' which means similar and 'pathein' which means to suffer. The basic principle is that 'similia similibus curantur': that the cure is similar to the symptoms. While allopathy attacks and 'fights' the disease, homoeopathy learns from the symptoms in order to give a remedy which does not stop the manifestation, but actually causes those symptoms in an healthy person. The symptoms are generated by a disharmony of vital energy, but there is no concept of an internal cause of disease. For allopathy, which sees the body in terms of the metaphor of an hydraulic system - illness is due to an internal structural disorder (reductionism) or to the modification of a dynamic phenomena (functionalism), in other words an alteration of the homeostatic mechanisms (Federspil 1990c).

For homoeopathy, illness is the sum of its symptoms: there are no diseases, only sick people (Nicholls 1988). The causality of illness, in Hahnemann's thought, is so 'subtle' that it cannot be perceived through human observation. Therefore homoeopathy shifts from trying to know the organic cause of illness to knowing the body-process of illness. Homoeopathy treats the symptomatology of the body, following Hering's Law, which states that there is an order and hierarchy in which the symptoms appear and disappear:

Symptoms disappear from within outward, from above downward, from more important to less important, and in reverse order of their appearance (Weiner 1989:61).

The disease disappears from within outward, from spiritual/mental dimensions to bodily, physical expressions¹. In Hahnemann's thought - which the puristas claim to follow

¹ Paracelsus' and Swedenborg's ideas about continuity between matter and spirit seem to have influenced Hahnemann (Fuller 1989).

closely - illness is generated from disharmony in the spiritual and etheric bodies which then 'materializes' in the physical body. In fact, homoeopathic remedies are created through 'spiritualizing matter' (Dethlefsen 1984). The process of dynamization takes place through a series of infinitesimal dilutions of the original substance in an alcohol base. At higher potencies, there is no longer any molecular presence of the original substance. The more dynamized the substance is, the stronger and 'deeper' the effect on the psychological, mental and spiritual bodies of the patients are. Homoeopathic remedies are peculiar to a certain person, rather than to a particular disease, and their method of 'validation' is experimental. All symptoms can be equally valid and there is not an 'evident' priority or chain of consequentiality. Different aspects of the illness are treated in a 'synchronic' manner. Allopathy, on the other hand, tends to atomize the illness: to look 'objectively' into its 'evolutionary' process.

The first school of homoeopathy in Mexico, the 'Escuela Libre de Homeopatía', was founded in Mexico City under the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz at the end of the last century. Nowadays the only school which is recognized at national level is the 'Escuela Nacional de Homeopatía del Politécnico Nacional' in Mexico D.F. (Data provided by the director of the 'Departamento de Medicina Alternativa de la Universidad de Guadalajara'). In fact, the 'Colegio de Homeopatas de Jalisco A.C.', which trains only allopathic doctors, and the school of 'Homoeopatas Puros de Jalisco' - which accepts anybody who is interested in the course regardless whether they have previous medical training - are not officially recognized. The first leads towards an *alternista* approach, which combines allopathy with homoeopathy; the second follows the teachings of Hahnemann closely and adopts a 'holistic' view of the person. The second type of homoeopaths cannot advertise their practice openly and publicize their services by word of mouth. Some schools, then, are more 'official' than others.

APPENDIX D

El señor Francisco Celis y su esposa Isaura Berta de Celis ofrecieron antenoche en su residencia Avenida Pedro Loza n. 109, una fiesta de su hija, la señorita Isaura Clementina con motivo de haber cumplido los quince años...hubo buena música y los espaciosos salones dedicados al baile estaban adornados artísticamente y lucían profusa iluminación. Pero después de haber empezado el festejo y cuando la concurrencia era muy nutrida, se presentó lujosamente vestida y al lado de su corte de honor la festejada, quien fué muy felicitada. La corte de honor estuvo formada para la siguientes señoritas... [four names]. Al filo de la media noche se obsequió a los asistentes con una fabulosa cena que se roció con abundantes caldos. Entre las personas que asistieron anotamos a las señoritas...[list of 21 names]..a las señoras [52 names] y a los señores [22 names]. (El Informador: 7/2/1940)

(Mr. F. C. and his wife I. B. de C. gave a fiesta in honour of their daughter, Miss Isaura Clementina on the occasion of her fifteenth birthday...There was good music and the large salons for the ball were artistically decorated and light. After the beginning of the fiesta and the arrival of many guests, she appeared in an expensive dress accompanied by her court of honour which warmly greeted her. The court of honour was composed of the following young girls...At midnight the guests were invited to a wonderful meal that was accompanied by a large quantity of souces. Among the people who were present we noted the following the Misses..Mrs and Mr...)

The standard description, with stereotyped jargon, fifty year later, is slightly different but the message sounds similar:

En emotiva cerimonia celebrada en días pasados en el templo La Madre de Cristo, la señorita Gissella Lopez Herrera dió gracias al Altísimo para permitirle celebrar el arribo a esta edad que con ilusión habia esperado desde niña, sus quince años. La dichosa quinceñera es hija del Sr. Gilberto Lopez Davila y de la Sr. Teresita Herrera Lopez, quienes estuvieron compartiendo con ella momentos de emotividad y alegría. En este inolvidable acontecimiento Gissella fué acompañada frente al altar por sus padrinos, el Sr. Mario Castañon Bulle y la Sra. Lilia Cervantes de Castañon, quienes unieron sus oraciones a las del sacerdote, sus papás y la distinguida concurrencia, para pedir para ella una lluvia de bendiciones. Encargo de officiar la solemne misa de gratitud el R. P. Santiago Ramirez, quien durante su homilía se exployó ante la festejada con un bello mensaje, que

sin duda ella guardará en su corazón, ofreciéndole enseguida la Sagrada Eucaristía...Posteriormente todos los allí congregados se encontraron en el círculo Francés, donde se llevó a cabo una gratísima recepción en honor de la homenajead, quién disfrutó de momentos muy agradables. Ahí Gissela acompañada para su chambelan Ramon Baldazar Garcia, bailó las bellas melodías Novicia Rebelde y Castillos de Hielo, luciendo antes sus invitados su lindo atuendo, realizado en seda color rosa y encaje bordado con pedrería. (El Informador 18/8/1990)

(In an emotional ceremony celebrated a few days ago, in the church of the Mother of Christ, Miss G.L.H. gave thanks to the Lord who had allowed her to reach the age of fifteen of which she had dreamt since she was a child. She is the daughter of Mr G.L.T and Mrs T.H.L., who shared her touching and joyful moment. In this unforgettable moment G. was taken to the altar by her godparents Mr M.C.B. and his wife Mrs L.C.C. who joined their prayers with those of the priest, the parents and the distinguished guests. In charge of the solemn Mass of thanksgiving was father S.R., who offered beautiful messages to the girl during the sermon which, without doubt, she will keep in her heart. Then he offered her the Eucharist...Afterwards, all the guests met at the French Club, where a beautiful reception took place in honour of the girl for whom the Mass was given, who enjoyed pleasant moments. So G. accompanied by her chambelan R.B.G. danced the beautiful melodies 'Novicia Rebelde' and 'Castillo de Hielo', showing her beautiful outfit made of pink silk with inserts of embroidery and stones).

APPENDIX E

MADRE DEL CIELO MORENA (CEB song)

Choir: Madre del cielo morena, Señora de América Latina, ternura en tu mirar tienes María, tienes color igual a tantas razas. Virgen serena, Señora de estos pueblos tan sufridos, patronas de pequeños y oprimidos, sobre nosotros tu favor derrama.

Enciende a nuestros jóvenes, tu luz y muestra a nuestros pobres a Jesús, que el mundo entero, Madre, sienta tu amor. Enseña al que pan tiene a compartir y ayuda a los sin pan a no morir, concede a nuestro pueblo de caminar en paz.

Alimenta la esperanza que nació, enseña al pueblo a no callar su voz, despierte al insensible, dale corazón. Dile que la justicia es condición de un mundo más humano que el de hoy y a este nuestro pueblo, guíale a Jesús.

(Dark Mother of the sky, Lady of Latin America, you, Mary, have a tender look and a colour similar to many races, serene Virgin. Lady of these people in pain, patron of little and oppressed people, your protection flows over us.

Inspire your people with light, and show our poor people Jesus, so that all the world, Mary, may feel your love. Teach which bread we need to share, and help those who do not have bread to survive, allow our people to walk in peace.

Encourage the hope that has been born; teach the people not to keep silent; awaken the insensitive giving them heart. Tell them that justice is a need for a better world than the present one, and guide this people towards Jesus).

APPENDIX F

This is a list of the main actors and families which appear in the thesis:

* **Padre Nemo** and **Padre Rodolfo** are the priests in charge of the parishes of the **Anunciación** and **Santa Magdalena** respectively. Since 1980 until 1988 **Padre Francisco** had been in charge of the church of the **Anunciación**.

* **Doña Marisol** is a woman in her early seventies born in a **ranchito** in Los Altos de Jalisco. She has two daughters from a first marriage. She then married **Don Domingo**, born in San Cristóbal de Chapala, who is sixty-five and still works as a house decorator. They have a son **Gherónimo** who is married with five children; he works with his father and lives in the back of his parents' house. **Ana** is a niece of **Don Donato** who lives between Polanco and San Cristóbal. Their family was one of the first to get involved in the development of the CEBs in the **Anunciación**.

* **Soledad** is originally from Tabasco, Zacatecas and she is thirty-two. She used to live in the colonia Oblatos and since she married **Leo** has been living in Polanco; they have two children and live in a relatively well-furnished house.

* **Mauricio** is in his middle thirties and has come to Guadalajara from a village near Colima. He is married to **Lola** and they have three children. They live in a rented flat.

* **Don Rodrigo** and **Doña Miranda** live with their three children, their daughter-in-law, and two young grandsons, in a large but still partially unbuilt house on the edges of Polanco. They both participate in the CEBs, and **Don Roberto** is also a coordinator of the Comunidades.

* The family **Ortega - Jesús, Diana** and their eight children, among them **Maribel**, and **Nati** - has been living in Polanco since the early 1960s. Their family is affluent for Polanco's standard and their house is well-furnished and provided with good equipment.

* **Alfonso** and his wife **Elsa** have been members of the MFC for a long time and recently they have also entered the CEBs. They

live in a two-storey house with their three sons and their elder daughter, **Sabrina**, who has recently turned fifteen.

APPENDIX G

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCGM: Consejo de Colaboración Municipal de Guadalajara
CEBs: Comunidades Eclesiales de Base
CoReTT: Comisión Regularizadora para la Tenencia de la Tierra
IMDEC: Instituto Mexicano de Desarrollo Comunitario
IMSS: Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social
ISSSTE: Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los
Trabajadores del Estado.
MFC: Movimiento Familiar Cristiano.
OCIP: Organización Colonos Independientes de Polanco
PAN: Partido de Acción Nacional
PRI: Partido Revolucionario Institucional
PRD: Partido Revolucionario Democrático.
SSA: Secretaría de Salubridad y Asistencia.
SEDOC: Servicios Educativos de Occidente
ZMG: Zona Metropolitana de Guadalajara

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