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VIVA ZAPATA!: GENERATION, GENDER, AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE RECEPTION OF EJIDO REFORM IN OAXACA[1]

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INTRODUCTION

When the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista Army of National Liberation [EZLN]) launched a well-organized insurrection and temporarily took over four cities in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas on January 1, 1994, their pre-dawn attacks were timed to coincide with the official starting date for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and to draw attention to the economic and political marginalization of Mexico's indigenous and peasant population. In the names of Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa the Zapatistas brought forward demands for land, work, housing, nutrition, health, education, independence, liberty, democracy, justice and peace. On January 11th, representatives from 140 indigenous and peasant organizations met in the warehouse of the Pajal Yakaltic Cooperative in Chiapas and brought land to the center of their discussion chanting:

> *Este articulo, el 27 constitucional, lo cambiaron sin preguntarnos, sin pedir nuestra palabra. Ahora es el tiempo de que nos escuchen, porque al quitarnos la tierra, nos quitan la vida.* (They changed Article 27 of the Constitution without asking us. Now it is time for them to listen to us because if they take away our land, they take away our life [Correa and Cesar López 1994, p.9]).

On January 25th, representatives from the State Assembly of Indigenous Authorities of the State of Guerrero issues a communique of solidarity with the Zapatistas and their demands. The same day in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, President Salinas de Gortari heard from representatives from 280 independent peasant and indigenous organizations who repeated the Zapatistas' demands for land redistribution, democratic reforms, aid to impoverished families, and an end to racism and discrimination against Mexico's indigenous population. Indigenous groups from Michoacan joined in as well. Throughout

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Mexico, protesters held rallies and marches to press the government to answer the Zapatistas demands.

The Zapatistas forced the world and certainly people within Mexico to pay attention to longstanding problems in land inequities and dissatisfaction with the December 1991 modifications to the agrarian reform codes embodied in Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. In a larger sense they highlight the social conflict wrought by ongoing structural adjustment policies as those who are increasingly marginalized in the process of economic development are politically silenced.

A cornerstone of Mexico's policy encouraging privatization and foreign investment is ending redistribution of land to peasants and allowing the 48 percent of Mexican national territory held in ejidos and indigenous communities to be privatized.[2] The modified Article 27, in conjunction with the *Ley Agraria* (Agrarian Law) that legislates its application, grants ejidatarios the ability to sell, buy or rent land, to hire labor or to associate with other producers and third parties, and to hold contracts with or establish joint-venture schemes with domestic and foreign private investors. Most significantly, it allows individual ejidatarios who have had use rights to land, the possibility of holding an individual title to land.

To facilitate the proposed changes in landholdings in Mexico's approximately 29,000 ejidos and indigenous communities, a new government office was created, the *Procuraduría Agraria* (Office of the Agrarian Ombudsman).[3] The certification program[4] of the Procuraduría is built around protecting the rights of ejidatarios through providing them with certificates specifying that particular plots of land belong to them as individuals. The possibility of holding individual title to a piece of land, however small, has motivated some ejidatarios to formally enter the government's certification program. Upon signing up, they receive an onslaught of information, official visits from lawyers and agronomists, advice, teams to measure their community boundaries and individual plots, invitations to participate in programs to "help" peasants and a pile of paper to document the entire process. As of August 1993, the large majority of Mexico's ejidos and indigenous communities had yet to become officially enrolled in the *Programa de Certificación de Derechos Ejidales y Titulación de Solares Urbanos* (Program for Certification of Ejidal Rights and Titling of Urban House Lots,

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[2] *Ejido* refers to agrarian reform communities granted land taken from large landholders after the Mexican revolution. Ejido land is held corporately by the group of people constituting the ejido. Heads of households are awarded use rights to land and they are known as *ejidatarios*. Their rights can be inherited by their offspring and many families have consistently worked the same parcels of land through several generations. Until the change in Article 27, ejido land could not be legally sold or rented to outsiders. Indigenous communities, legally called *comunidades agrarias* (agrarian communities) did not receive redistributed lands, but had their landholdings legally recognized and titled under the 1942 agrarian reform law. Land in comunidades agrarias is communally held and does not necessarily follow the same pattern of land use as in ejidos. Here I will use the term indigenous community to refer to "comunidades agrarias," the better to recognize their cultural legacy as well as land-use patterns.

[3] Here the Procuraduría Agraria will be referred to as the Procuraduría.

[4] The certification program is described in detail below.

[PROCEDE]). Predicted completion dates for the program are constantly changing as administrators of the Procuraduría continually run into historical land battles between communities, family feuds, and past measuring and mapping errors. Many indigenous communities still lack basic legal maps (*carpetas básicas*) outlining their boundaries.

The political and bureaucratic procedures of the certification program are forcing individuals and communities to make explicit decisions about their relationship to land within a short period of time. This crucial period reveals beliefs and values about land, work, the government, economic development, history, and social relations that usually remain below the surface. This paper is a preliminary analysis of the contradictory ways in which the ejido reform program has been received in three ejidos in central Oaxaca. These sites were chosen because they represent a part of Mexico where small-scale subsistence agriculture is giving way to an economy based on a mix of work in the informal sector in nearby Oaxaca, migration, small industry, and farming. They represent a mix of Zapotec and mestizo communities. All three field sites are long-established ejidos, and two of them have significant formal political participation by women. While offering specific information on the case of ejido reform in Oaxaca, these three sites also provide insights into agrarian transformations elsewhere as a liberalizing global economy permanently reorders the social, cultural, economic, and political world of rural people often categorized as "peasants."

Rural men and women in Oaxaca have entered the official process for certifying and ultimately titling their ejido land with a mixture of accommodation and resistance to officials charged with carrying out ejido reform. The process brings to light how one generation whose members' lives were transformed in the course of agrarian struggle to gain their ejido land gives way to another with intensely different cultural and economic expectations. The younger generation of ejidatarios have an uncertain future and have grown up in a world of urban work, migration, and complex cultural exchange within Mexico and between Mexico and the United States. At the same time, women, who have functioned within institutional arrangements built upon male authority within ejidos confront new limits and possibilities in the ejido reform process. Looking at the reactions of ejidatarios and ejidatarias to the certification process provides us with a window into their minds at a crucial moment. It also provides information on what the position is of most rural people who have not taken up arms, want to take advantage of an opportunity to secure their land rights, but have a contradictory relationship with the government and its representatives.

This paper begins by first discussing the creation and functioning of the Procuraduría Agraria, the steps communities go through in the certification process, and the agrarian history of the three field sites chosen. It then focuses on how generational and gender differences have affected the reception of the certification program in the three field sites and ends by suggesting some possible long-term outcomes of the certification process and their meaning for men and women in the communities studied.

A NEW FACE FOR AN OLD GOVERNMENT: THE PROCURADURÍA AGRARIA

In an era of downsizing, decentralization, and government spending cuts, the creation of the Procuraduría Agraria in Mexico is a striking occurrence. Created in early 1992 to carry out the national ejido certification program, in March 1993 the office had 3,161 employees and was still growing (Warman 1993, p.3). President Carlos Salinas de Gortari commented in March 1993 that there was not a single federal government entity in which the Procuraduría was not known (Salinas 1993). The Procuraduría has a structure of regional offices (*delegaciones*) and local districts (*residencias*). The state of Oaxaca, for example, is one regional office and has ten local districts.

Each regional office has a head administrator. Because the national head of the Procuraduría, Arturo Warman, was formerly the head of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenous Institute [INI]), many INI employees have been tapped to staff Procuraduría offices throughout the nation. The head of Oaxaca's Procuraduría is a former INI employee and an anthropologist. His background in agrarian issues came primarily through historical research and working in defense of indigenous land rights.

Below the regional director are three levels of employees. Each local district is overseen by a *residente* (resident) who acts as a coordinator and overseer. Below this person are *visitadores*, literally "visitors," young professionals who have completed an intensive three-week training session on the new agrarian reform codes. Below them, but working closely with them are *becarios campesinos* (scholarship holding peasants) employed as *auxiliares* (assistants). These are also young people, usually from rural backgrounds, who work with the visitadores in researching legal issues and organizing and training ejidatarios as they go through the certification process. In August 1993, there were 89 visitadores and 170 becarios campesinos in the Oaxaca regional office. While only 100 of Oaxaca's 732 ejidos have officially entered the process, visitadores and auxiliares work with a wide range of ejido and indigenous communities to try and prepare them to enter the process. Each visitador works with an average of two auxiliares and together they cover approximately 30 ejidos and indigenous communities.

Interviews with seven visitadores in the state of Oaxaca revealed a consistent profile of these government ambassadors. Most are recent college graduates in law, accounting, and agronomy. A few have degrees in social science. Many were recruited directly from their universities by the Procuraduría. Most are in their twenties and have relatively little experience working professionally in peasant communities. There were a few exceptional visitadores who have worked five to ten years in a variety of grassroots level development programs. Many visitadores come from semi-rural and urban settings and have limited personal experience working in the countryside although their parents may have owned land or been ejidatarios. Their knowledge about the history of agrarian

reform in Mexico and its consequences for rural inhabitants comes primarily from the three week intensive course they completed before beginning their work for the Procuraduría.

The course consisted of going over the mechanics of Article 27, the Ley Agraria, reconciliation and counseling, dispute mediation, and detailed knowledge of the legal process that ejido assemblies have to go through to correctly complete the certification process. Several visitadores interviewed commented that they had not really thought about agrarian reform before they took the job and their opinions about the certification process were formed while they were taking the preparatory course. One visitador commented:

> I didn't really have any opinion before I took the course. I started forming my opinion there. Most people in my group were young, from 22 to 25 years old. They were not from campesino backgrounds so this was the first they really heard about the process in detail.

The issue of privatization is not brought up in the introductory course. Another visitador with an unusual amount of experience working with peasants and urban poor people commented that the training course emphasized all the wonderful things that certification would do to preserve the rights of ejidatarios, but failed to mentioned some of the negatives.

> I do think that people will privatize. If we don't strengthen the ejidos as units then they will privatize. This program does give legal security to ejidatarios, but it also offers security for the investor. A lot of people working here don't recognize this. In the training courses we received, they didn't want to really acknowledge the dangers of privatization. It wasn't dealt with. I think most people who work here don't really see both sides of the coin.

In an interview, the head of the Oaxaca regional office of the Procuraduría stated his view of the process, a view shared by most visitadores interviewed. He firmly believes the certification process will secure legal rights for ejidatarios and will promote democracy within ejidos because of the requirement that all decisions be made in ejido assemblies. He felt that prospects for privatization were highly overrated.

> I think that some agro-industries may come to work in Tuxtepec and in the coastal regions of Oaxaca that have the capacity to produce tropical fruits and coffee. The cattle sector is already oriented toward export on the coast. As for the phantom of privatization, I don't see it as a sure thing. We haven't gotten any requests for privatization of land. People aren't running out and selling their plots. . .This program is to regularize plots. The final aim is to pass out certificates. A title implies that it is private property. Right now we are only giving titles for urbanized house lots and certifying rights to land plots. If someone has a certificate they can't sell the land.

They have to exchange their certificate for a title and that has to be approved by the ejido assembly. It's a different process.

About one-third of the visitadores working in Oaxaca are women. Many of them come from urban, middle-class backgrounds and while comfortable working and speaking in public, they noted that their presence can take some time for rural ejidatarios to get used to. Their age, background, and positions of authority as women contrasts with a political culture in ejidos where older men, often quite poor, are those with the most authority. This appears to be slowly changing in some ejidos, however, as discussed below.

Auxiliares or becarios campesinos are the second major category of employee found in the Procuraduría. They were recruited through an open competition in which ejidos and peasant organizations could name potential candidates. In Oaxaca, the ruling party affiliated *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (National Confederation of Peasants, [CNC]) deluged the Procuraduría with nominees in an attempt to gain additional organizers, but most were not accepted. Auxiliares should have completed a secondary school education and come from a peasant background. Many of the young people working as auxiliares have grown up in semi-urban environments and worked as wage laborers and/or in the urban informal sector as well as in the countryside. This is a socialization they share with many younger ejidatarios.

Because they are supposed to share a campesino background with ejidatarios, the auxiliares are expected to develop close relations with people in the ejidos where they are working. In some cases, their gender identity has been most important. In several situations observed, male auxiliares were paid more attention to than higher ranking female visitadores, at least initially. They receive training in administering and interpreting the new law and explaining it to ejidatarios. While auxiliares may have a more cynical view of the certification program given their past experience with agrarian reform issues, they are hesitant to express any doubts because of their status as the lowest-level employee in the Procuraduría. In many cases they are the footsoldiers of the Procuraduría doing the majority of research and nitty-gritty organizing of ejidatarios.

Both auxiliares and visitadores interviewed and observed in the state of Oaxaca were working extraordinary long hours. In addition to working Monday through Friday, they usually worked evenings and weekends as well. Their work of preparing communities to enter the certification process by attempting to resolve outstanding boundary disputes with neighbors, obtaining a basic legal maps of their ejido boundaries, as well as their work in resolving internal and external conflicts for those ejidos already in the process continually revealed more problems. Some joked that they would have jobs for the rest of their lives as one dispute resolved simply revealed another. Since the certification process has started, a virtual Pandora's box of issues has opened up that will take ever-increasing amounts of resources and personnel to resolve.

While the Procuraduría is the primary government entity responsible for administering the new law, it works in conjunction with five other agencies. Most important to the certification process is the *Instituto de Estadística, Geografía e Informática* (Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics [INEGI]) which is responsible for measuring the perimeters of ejido land, individual plots, and house lots and drawing up maps for these. In the certification program they measure land in the presence of a specially created auxiliary commission, ejido authorities, and all parties whose land is involved. Beyond the Procuraduría, they are the most active government participants in the first half of the certification process.

The *Registro Agrario Nacional* (National Agrarian Registry, [RAN]) issues individual and common use certificates and titles when requested. In most cases RAN employees have yet to be involved because most ejidos are caught in external and/or internal boundary disputes. To resolve these disputes, special *Tribunales Agrarios* (Agrarian Tribunals) have been installed, in many cases next door to the office of the Procuraduría.

Conspicuously absent from the certification program is the *Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria* (Ministry of Agrarian Reform [SRA]) which has administered land redistribution and adjudicated legal land disputes since Carranza wrote the first agrarian reform law in 1915. Within the certification and titling process, the SRA is delegated to distributing information on the process and referring ejidatarios to the Procuraduría. According to Roberto Olivares, the state delegate from SRA for Oaxaca, many ejidatarios continue to come to the SRA with problems stemming from the certification process.

The *Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos* (Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources [SARH]) is also involved. They are supposed to promote the observance of regulations and procedures regarding water resources and forests. In addition they are administering a government farm program initiated in October 1993 called PROCAMPO (Support Program for the Mexican Farm Sector [SARH 1993]). PROCAMPO offers farmers of corn, beans, wheat, rice, soy beans, sorghum, and cotton a direct payment of about US$100 per hectare over the next fifteen years. After a one-year transition phase that mixes the new direct payment with already existing price supports, the latter will be terminated prior to the 1994-95 autumn-winter cropping season. Many observers contend that the result will harm Mexican producers forced to compete with cheaper subsidized foreign imports (especially from the United States) as Mexican crop prices align with international prices. The announcement of this program by the government is evidence of a certain amount of backpeddling in the structural adjustments being carried out to facilitate NAFTA. PROCAMPO will clearly soften the blow of being "eased" out of the rural sector for the three million ejidatarios (and their families) the Mexican government is predicting will benefit from PROCAMPO (Moguel 1993, p.8). Many ejidatarios in Oaxaca perceived PROCAMPO as an

extension of the certification process since the questions SARH officials posed to them from registration forms were almost identical to those asked by officials from the Procuraduría.

Finally, the *Secretaría de Desarollo Social* (Ministry of Social Development, [SEDESOL]) is providing some social service programs, particularly through *Solidaridad* (the National Solidarity Program, alsoknown as PRONASOL) that are supposed to support ejidatarios - particularly women, indigenous peoples, wage workers, and the poor.

In sum, the maintenance of the Procuraduría Agraria and the other agencies it works with in administering the new agrarian reform law has resulted in a new generation of bureaucrats whose career advancement is pegged to the success of the certification and titling program. They are among the top recipients of government resources and support. Their sincere beliefs in the importance of the program in saving the Mexican ejido, promoting democratic processes in ejido assemblies, and guaranteeing individual property rights are being communicated to Mexico's rural population.

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

To receive an individual certificate for their piece of land, (which under a separate process can be converted to private title) ejidatarios must participate in PROCEDE and jointly go through a formal series of meetings, measuring procedures, and dispute resolutions with officials from the Procuraduría, from INEGI, and from RAN. The process begins by visits from a visitador and one or two auxiliares from the Procuraduría to "inform" and "sensitize" people in the ejido. They usually meet several times with ejido officials (president, secretary, treasurer, security commission, and their alternates).[5] In the process of meeting with ejido officials and small groups of ejidatarios unofficially, visitatores and auxiliares gather data about the ejido for a diagnostic questionnaire and are supposed to assess the viability of the ejido being successfully incorporated into the certification program.

Once initial meetings have taken place and the ejido is perceived as "ready," an official meeting for "information and announcing" the certification process is held. All ejidatarios are highly encouraged to come to this meeting in which officials from the Procuraduría together with employees of INEGI outline the program. At least 50 percent of the ejidatarios need to be present at this meeting where a decision is made about whether or not to formally enter the certification

[5] The internal structure of the ejido is as follows: comisariado ejidal (ejido commissioner, head elected official), secretario (secretary), tesorero (treasurer), Consejo de Vigilancia (Security Council) consisting of presidente (president) and 4-5 members. Each of these office also has an alternate (suplente). The Consejo de Vigilancia is in charge of maintaining the security of the ejido's boundaries with neighboring communities, private property and with other ejidos as well as resolving internal disputes. They also play key roles in any land disputes through interacting with officials from the SRA.

program. At this same meeting a *comisión auxiliar* (auxiliary commission) is created which then is supposed to be the primary group of people responsible for carrying out the certification process in conjunction with elected ejido officials. The creation of a second set of ejido authorities through the "comisión auxiliar" often ends up in subtle conflict as they take over the role of elected ejido officials. In most cases both this comisión auxiliar and elected ejido officials end up working with and/or opposing the certification process. All the steps which are gone through thus involve a group of 16 ejidatarios who go to a never-ending round of meetings, discussions, and measurements.

After an ejido formally enters the certification program, an information meeting is supposed to be held by the comisión auxiliar to get approval from the ejidatarios in drawing up a list of those who have rights to land, creating a hand-drawn map which shows the distribution of individual plots within the ejido, and to clarify any internal conflicts. There are three categories of individuals with rights to land: (1) *ejidatarios con derechos* possess a certificate that recognizes their ejido grant; (2) *posesionarios con hecho* have parcels of land that they work, but do not have a certificate that recognizes their right to that land -- they have the most to gain from the certification and titling process; and (3) *avecindados* who do not have land to work, but possess land for housing and are eligible to receive titles for that land. To be included on the list of those who have rights to land, ejidatarios have to present the following documents: birth certificate and certificate of individual agrarian rights if they have it, or a letter certifying their rights from the ejido commissioner. Those who are named as inheriting ejido rights also must present documents. Gathering all of the documents is a very time consuming process.

The most labor intensive part of the certification program then begins. INEGI officials arrive in the community and begin measuring all of the individual ejidatarios' plots. Measuring requires the presence of the comisión auxiliar and ejidatarios whose plots border one another; elected ejido officials come along as well. Often people do not appear for the measuring of their plots and it has to be repeatedly rescheduled. And disagreements which have been laid aside take on new life as ejidatarios argue over whether a neighbor has slowly encroached on their plot or if putting in a road through the ejido is penalizing them. Boundaries must also be clarified with all surrounding communities, other ejidos, and all private landowners. In many Oaxacan ejidos this can involve a series of meetings with up to seven or eight other communities and ejidos as well as dozens of private land holders.

INEGI officials and ejido officials must walk to the far corners of the ejido and communal boundaries to verify where the land of one ejido or comunidad agraria ends and that of another begins. This process brings to light historical community battles over land, past measuring and mapping errors, and disagreements that were officially resolved between communities by the SRA, but remain unofficially unresolved as ejidatarios remember that their grandfathers and grandmothers

were not in agreement with past decisions. Most of the ejidos that have begun the certification program remain stuck in this phase because of internal and external land disputes.

If all disputes have been resolved, then a formal meeting is held to approve the list of all who have rights to land, to approve the boundaries of the ejido and the measurements and assignments of individual plots of land. The ejido assembly also has to approve the designation of land assigned to common use and as urban house plots. If this has all been agreed upon, then RAN provides certificates of individual ejido plots, certificates showing land designated for communal use, and titles for urban house plots.

THREE EJIDO FIELD SITES IN CENTRAL OAXACA

The state of Oaxaca has 732 ejidos and 777 indigenous communities with 70 percent of its territory held in ejido or communal status. There are approximately 330,000 ejidatarios and comuneros who consist of 43.7 percent of the economically active population of the state (Cambio XXI Fundación Oaxaca, A.C. 1992, p. 4). These 330,000 individuals are the targets of the Procuraduría's certification program.

In the state of Oaxaca, the Procuraduría has decided to give priority to rural ejidos over indigenous communities and urban ejidos. They appear to have fewer boundary disputes and irregularities. According to the head of the Oaxaca regional office, initial information was sent out to some indigenous communities including some in the Mixe region.

> One Mixe community came back to us with an official document from their assembly in which they voted against entering the PROCEDE (certification process). They said that the quality of their land varied considerably so that they couldn't assign individual parcels. Based on experiences similar to this, we have decided to come up with a more open model for comunidades agrarias that will let people decide for themselves whether or not they want to divide the land up into individual parcels.

Different land use patterns which involve rotation, some forms of communal farming, as well as extensive migration in many indigenous communities have resulted in few areas where specific plots of land are used consistently by the same family though time. The current model for certification is focused on individual rights to specific plots as well as shared rights. A more flexible model is needed for indigenous communities that would simply certify community boundaries, but stop short of attempting to certify and title individual plots.

Urban ejidos are being left for last. Illegal land sales and squatting are prevalent in the Oaxaca urban area. Growth of both working-class colonias and middle-class housing tracts are tied to illicit land transactions. Since possession of land counts heavily in one's favor according to the new law, high levels of conflict and tension are expected to emerge when the Procuraduría attempts to regularize the status of urban ejidos. In many cases, the outcome is likely to confirm what has already taken place.

Ejidos with a "good" profile for entering the certification program include those that have no obvious outstanding legal problems or ongoing conflicts with neighboring communities. The 100 ejidos now entered in the certification process in Oaxaca were thought to have these characteristics when they began the program. As organizers from the Procuraduría quickly found out, however, there are few ejidos without some kind of conflict. Three of these 100 ejidos that initially entered the program were chosen for study.

Santa María del Tule

Perhaps most famous for the tree at its center estimated to be close to 2,000 years old, Santa María del Tule is one of the oldest ejidos in Oaxaca. Formed in 1917, the ejido received 571 hectares from the Guendulain hacienda and another 28 hectares from a smaller one. The original presidential decree granting ejido land to El Tule bases it in restitution for land granted to the community in 1529. When the ejido was formed, the community consisted primarily of Valley Zapotec speakers, many of whom did not speak Spanish. Almost half of their original ejido land, however, was temporarily lost to the neighboring community of Tlalistac de Cabrera under an illegal deal cut by General Isaac M. Ibarra, leader of the rebel *serrano* mountain troops fighting against Venustiano Carranza and his federal soldiers from 1915 until 1920. The community finally reclaimed all of their ejido land in the mid-1920s with the help of the National Agrarian Commission.

Ejido land was used primarily for planting subsistence crops of corn, beans, and squash by ejidatarios who had worked as *peones* on the neighboring haciendas.[6] Due to their overwhelming poverty, many of the initial ejido beneficiaries were not able to work all of their land because they had no oxen or plows. Slowly the community advanced economically and by the 1940s most of the ejido land was being worked.

According to five elderly ejidatarios interviewed in 1993 and original ejido records, ejido land was not equally distributed in 1917. Those people who were related to or close friends with the ejido president at the time received more land. Some of these differences can still be noted today.

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[6] Peones refers to landless rural tenants who worked the farmland of local haciendas in exchange for part of the harvest (usually 50 percent) and/or who worked as day laborers paid in cash or in kind on a daily basis, usually in corn.

During the mid-1940s, a significant number of men in the ejido were recruited into the U.S. bracero program during World War II. U.S. contractors came all the way down to Oaxaca to find workers to fill in for American agricultural workers moving into defense jobs. Many of the ejidatarios interviewed had gone to the United States as braceros. While they were gone, their wives and children maintained the ejido plots. In some cases, women talked about going out to plow the fields themselves because they could not afford to pay someone else to work for them.

After the completion of the Pan-American highway linking El Tule to Oaxaca in 1948, community members began to look to Oaxaca for more work opportunities. Ejidatarios began to find part-time wage work in Oaxaca and women went on a daily basis to sell tortillas in the Oaxaca markets. El Tule received services such as electricity and new schools in the 1960s. El Tule's greater integration with Oaxaca and increased access to public education was also reflected linguistically. People who grew up in the 1960s and after, began to speak Spanish more exclusively, leaving Zapotec to their parents and grandparents.

As the population of the ejido increased and the original ejido land was divided up among the children and grandchildren of original ejidatarios, each person received smaller pieces of land. By the 1960s and 1970s, many ejidatarios received only one to two hectares of land, not enough to live from. Because of its proximity to Oaxaca, many younger ejidatarios or sons and daughters of ejidatarios began working full-time in Oaxaca as laborers, maids, market vendors, and with increasing education as clerks and secretaries. By the 1980s, there were two distinct generations of ejidatarios - those ages 40-80 who still worked full-time in the fields and those in their 20s and 30s who were more oriented toward working in the urban wage labor force.

The 1980s also marked increasing commercial interest in the land surrounding El Tule. In the mid-1980s, PEMEX approached the ejido with offers to buy land for a huge oil depository. While the ejidatarios initially voted down the proposition, PEMEX sent people out to individually lobby the ejidatarios and eventually they voted again and sold them the land for $100 per acre. A plastic bag factory and another small industry also established themselves on ejido land. The outer edges of Oaxaca also began to approach the margins of the city and in the late 1980s, the government housing authority established a residential area for government employees right next to some of El Tule's prime ejido land. Called, "El Retiro," it now has 8,300 inhabitants to El Tule's 6,800.

By 1992 there were 308 people claiming ejidal rights in El Tule. Of these, 79 or 25 percent are women, primarily widows and single mothers. Interviews in El Tule indicated that parents are increasingly giving both daughters and sons ejidal rights, regardless of their marital status. It seems likely therefore, that the number of women ejidatarios will continue to increase in the future. El Tule entered the certification process in May 1993 and in August 1993 was involved in clarifying internal boundary disputes between ejidatarios.

Unión Zapata

Located about 45 kilometers from Oaxaca, Unión Zapata is one of the poorest communities found in the central valleys of Oaxaca. Originally called Loma Larga, the people living in what is now Unión Zapata worked as peones on three surrounding haciendas, El Fuerte, Tanivet, and de Don Pedrillo. Those few that had oxen would farm land *a medias* (sharecropping) with the local *hacendados* (owners of large estates called *haciendas*), turning over 50 percent of their harvest to them. Those who had no oxen would work smaller plots with hoes and as peones. They were paid at the rate of 1-2 *almudes* of corn per day.[7]

The original population of Loma Larga only numbered about ten families in the early 1930s. When locals began organizing to form an ejido with a politician from Tlacolula, they had to recruit new community members from surrounding settlements to come up with the 20 families needed to apply for an ejido grant. They moved approximately ten families, houses and all, from the surrounding villages of San Lorenzo Albarados, Díaz Ordaz, Mitla, Santa Ana, Xáaga, and the Don Pedrillo hacienda. About four or five families of the original inhabitants were Zapotec speakers, but the majority only spoke Spanish. A few Zapotec speakers remain in the community in the 1990s, most of them quite elderly.

The ejido was officially established in 1936 with 575 hectares of land taken from two surrounding haciendas. In 1938 the ejido received a 28 hectare enlargement (ampliación) from a third neighboring hacienda. There were 36 beneficiaries to the original ejido grant.

Like El Tule, the ejidatarios of Unión Zapata had few tools or animals for working their land. A visit to Oaxaca by Lázaro Cárdenas after the ejido was granted resulted in a present of five oxen and five steel plows. The oxen were shared among the ejidatarios until a cattle disease killed all but one a year later. Hacendados harassed the new ejidatarios in their fields for nearly two years after the ejido was formed by sending armed guards to threaten them. According to original ejidatarios still alive, the land was distributed equally with each original ejidatario getting about 3 hectares of land to farm. A majority of the ejido land is mountainous and not suitable for plow agriculture.

Ejidatarios in Unión Zapata planted corn, beans, squash and some alfalfa. In the early 1940s, people began to irrigate some of their land by hand with pot irrigation. This was used primarily on alfalfa. During the 1940s, women began purchasing milk cows and selling milk and cheese in Mitla and Tlacolula, a practice they still carry out today. This year-round economic activity makes an important contribution to household budgets.

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[7] One almud of corn is equal to approximately two kilos.

Because Unión Zapata was a community cobbled together for the purposes of obtaining ejido land, it had many potential sources of conflict. Beginning in the late 1930s, two decades of violence darkened the village. A series of four murders began involving a conflict between people who had moved in from another settlement and those who had originally lived in Loma Larga before the ejido was formed. Pretexts for murder included plowing beyond the designated ejido plot into another's plot, restitution for bribes supposedly taken from hacendados to prevent the ejido's initial formation, and revenge for other killings. In 1947, one of the primary killers and his associates left and their ejido rights were officially revoked and passed on to other inhabitants. A final revenge murder took place in 1955, closing a violent era.

About one-third of the ejidatarios in Unión Zapata worked as braceros in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. No one remained in the United States and migration did not start up again until the 1980s. While men worked as braceros, women maintained the ejido plots with the help of their children and hired workers. Women have traditionally worked with men in the fields during planting, weeding, and harvesting time, assisting with everything except driving the plow. A few long-time widows in Unión Zapata have even taken on that chore for lack of an alternative.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, ejidatarios continued to produce primarily for their own consumption, selling corn surpluses and alfalfa in the nearby urban centers of Mitla and Tlacolula. Gasoline-driven pumps became more prevalent providing irrigation for alfalfa. In the 1980s, an American living on a piece of rented ejido land in a neighboring community taught several community members how to grow vegetables including tomatoes, radishes, onions, and garlic. Fifteen to twenty ejidatarios now grow commercial vegetable crops on their land selling them in Oaxaca. This has proven to be most popular with younger ejidatarios.

While older ejidatarios in Unión Zapata continued to work their land in the 1980s, their sons and daughters began to work increasingly outside of the ejido. A chicken-hatching plant employs 10-15 young men and another ten are working in a PEMEX gas station in nearby Tlacolula. Others work in Oaxaca or have begun to migrate to the United States. Interviews revealed a second migration flow beginning in the mid-1980s of people now in their twenties and thirties. Some have stayed for as long as five years.

Despite its proximity to Oaxaca and to the population centers of Mitla and Tlacolula, Unión Zapata has few services. It has no health clinic, physician or nurse. Many of the houses are one or two room adobe constructions with no floor. Few families have sunken latrines and health is generally poor with the adult male population engaging in heavy drinking.

Seventy-four people are currently recognized as having ejidal rights. Three of them are women. In 1990, Unión Zapata had a population of 696, with approximately 106 households. Unlike

El Tule, ejidatarios in Unión Zapata are not passing use rights on to their daughters. While the three women who are ejidatarias attend and participate in meetings and one of them has been named to an ejido cargo, they have a low profile in the political process.

Unión Zapata entered the certification program in February 1993. Shortly after entering the program a boundary dispute emerged with the municipal seat of Mitla. When Mitla received its ejido grant in 1941, a measuring error occurred. Authorities from Unión Zapata signed the Mitla document testifying to the measurements taken. In 1993 when the original ejido map of Unión was compared to that of Mitla, an inconsistency emerged in the two maps, placing about three hectares of land in the mountainous part of both ejidos in dispute. In January 1994, the dispute was still unresolved. Additional problems occurred with another neighboring community that initially did not have a legal map of its communal lands. Delays also occurred in getting all 50 private property owners that have common boundaries with the ejido to sign the appropriate documents.

San Dionisio Ocotlán

Located a few kilometers from the market center of Ocotlán de Morelos, San Dionisio had a history of local stratification. Before San Dionisio formed its ejido in 1927, the community had a high number of small property holders when compared to other communities. About 88 families out of 250 owned 350 hectares of rainfed farming land. About 162 families were landless and worked either as tenants for smaller local land owners or as peones for some of the surrounding hacendados (SRA 1927, p. 7). Several of the local land owners had holdings of up to 25 hectares. Workers on local haciendas were paid at the rate of fifty centavos or one almud of corn per day. At the turn of the century the population consisted of both Zapotec speakers and Spanish-speaking mestizos. Seeking to distinguish themselves from their monolingual Zapotec neighbors in Santa Lucia, the community moved towards being exclusively Spanish-speaking after the Mexican Revolution.

San Dionisio processed its first request for ejido lands in 1917, declaring that it did not have even a handful of dirt to farm and that lands that originally belonged to the community had been taken over by surrounding haciendas including Santa Rosa Lavichigana, San Jose, Lachilaita and La Gachupina (SRA 1926). It took ten years for the community to receive ejido lands. And it received less than originally requested because many of the surrounding haciendas had already been expropriated for the ejidos of other communities. San Dionisio received 354 hectares distributed to 118 individuals, an average of three hectares per person.

The awarding of ejidal rights to a majority of the population quickly shifted the local dynamics of stratification as large and medium-sized property holders could no longer count on the

landless as a labor force. Several elderly people recalled that the rich went downhill quickly as they lost their source of labor and began to sell their property on the local land market and to neighboring Santa Lucía. After receiving their land, ejidatarios produced corn, beans, and squash for local consumption and sold surpluses in the nearby market of Ocotlán.

In the 1940s and 1950s male ejidatarios went to the United States as braceros, leaving their wives and children to work the plots. Some of these men stayed in the United States, or moved elsewhere in Mexico, losing access to their ejido plots. By 1942 there were 250 individuals with rights to ejido parcels in San Dionisio. As the population grew and some ejidatarios abandoned their plots, new people moved in to take over their rights. In 1977, 45 people who had abandoned their plots were stripped of their ejido rights and 37 people were denied rights of succession. Forty three new people were granted ejido rights, including 14 women (SRA 1977, p. 21). In the 1970s, young men from the community increasingly began to work outside of the community in some of the light industry surrounding Ocotlán and in Oaxaca. Young people also started a second migration stream to the United States in the mid-1980s.

Like El Tule and Union Zapata, ejidatarios in San Dionisio began irrigating alfalfa fields with pot irrigation and then with gasoline-driven pumps. By the 1960s, milk cows had reached San Dionisio and women were engaged in cheese making and milking. They sold their products locally and in Ocotlán. In the 1980s, about 25 women began embroidering blouses and shirts for merchants in San Juan Chilateca. Both of these activities are important sources of household income.

In 1984, the president of the ejido pushed local women to petition for status as a *Unidad Agro-Industrial de la Mujer* (Women's Agro-Industrial Unit ([UAIM]) with the SRA. The 1971 Federal Agrarian Reform Law allowed women to form organizations within the structure of the ejido to farm collectively or carry out small-scale development projects. Receiving official status as a UAIM allowed women to receive land equivalent to that held by one ejidatario.

The UAIM in San Dionisio received official status in 1984, but remained dormant until 1990 when some new members joined the group. They were given a plot of land planted in maguey cactus that required considerable effort to remove. With the encouragement of the new members, the women pooled their resources and labor and worked for two years to clear the land. In 1992 they planted and harvested corn, beans and squash, working their plot collectively. In 1993 a dispute over who the legitimate president of the group was and the defection of a former UAIM president with three other women caused internal problems. The group did not plant their land.

Many women in the UAIM also participate in another organization, the *Unión de Mujeres Campesinas* (Union of Peasant Women) which initially received support from the SARH, the CNC,

and the former governor of Oaxaca. In 1993 they continued to receive support from the CNC and from PRONASOL.

San Dionisio entered the ejido certification program in May 1993. At that time there were 93 ejidatarios in a community of 900 with approximately 178 households. Seventeen women are ejidatarias. Another 15-20 women who are not ejidatarias were organized into the UAIM.

In August 1993, ejidatarios faced a number of problems. They had a border dispute with neighboring Santa Lucia. In addition, some members of the ejido wanted to take away land allotted to women in the UAIM because of their internal conflicts. Two different groups of women were fighting to be recognized as official members of the UAIM so that they can receive title to the land. Finally, many people in San Dionisio have been renting their land *a medias* to farmers from Santa Lucía. In some cases this arrangement has existed for many years, giving those in Santa Lucía long periods in possession of ejido land from San Dionisio.

GENERATION AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Participation in the certification program is a process saturated with history. The whole arena of agrarian reform is wrought with historical memory that conjures up images of Emiliano Zapata and the greatest land redistributor of all time in Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas (president from 1934 to 1940). For the majority of current ejidatarios who are more than forty years of age, the recent changes in the law are indisputably linked to the agrarian struggle of the revolution. For their children who may be young ejidatarios or named as successors, ejido reform has a different and often contradictory meaning. While they would like to believe in the dream of working the land to earn a living in a tranquil rural community, many have already worked in urban areas and migrated to the United States. Their cultural boundaries do not stop with their communities or the Oaxaca region, but extend throughout Mexico and into the United States where they have either actually lived or lived in their minds through sharing in U.S. culture brought back by their friends and family in tapes, video cassettes, photographs, books, and conversations. In this section I will highlight some of the different generational perspectives on ejido reform held by ejidatarios and discuss their overlap and contradictions.

For middle-aged and elderly ejidatarios, the mapping of community boundaries and individual plots and the resurrection and examination of original ejido documents readily brings to mind the sacrifice and struggle they went through to obtain land. For most it also serves as a point of reflection on what life was like in their communities before they received ejido land. All 20 ejidatarios (10 men and 10 women) between the ages of 45 and 90 who told me their life histories

had very vivid memories of how difficult life was before their ejido was won and the sacrifices made to obtain and keep the land. All but one woman interviewed (whose family held private property) shared a common identity as descendants of peones.

Luisa Ortega Martínez of Unión Zapata, 80 years old, recalls what life was like before the ejido when she and her husband worked as peones on neighboring haciendas:

> There were years in which we had no corn. We had to turn over half of our harvest to the hacienda. So when the harvest was small, there was hardly anything left over for us. So we would borrow corn from the hacienda. We would have to work it off. When there was work they would tell us to come and shuck and thresh the corn. We would go and I would get 1/2 almud of corn and my husband would get two almudes. We would eat the corn we got paid with. That is how we survived.

Those interviewed clearly identified the ejido with major improvements in the lives of their families and cited the creation of ejidos in their communities as historical turning points that pulled people out of devastating poverty. Many cited Lázaro Cárdenas and Emiliano Zapata as cultural heros. The ways in which elderly ejidatarios discussed Emiliano Zapata clearly resonates with the logic of using his name in a call for fundamental political and economic change as done by the EZLN. While the current program of the Procuraduría Agraria and the government seeks to distance itself from the Mexican Revolution, the most important gains of the Revolution in terms of land redistribution are forever etched in the minds of the majority of ejidatarios I interviewed.

Mario Gonzales of El Tule, age 92, recalls when Lázaro Cárdenas came to visit his community. He spoke passionately about Cárdenas' relationship to Zapata. In the description, Zapata takes on a christ-like image.

> When Cárdenas came here, he fed us. His servants brought us food there below the Tule tree as he spoke to us. We were "puros indios" then. We didn't speak Spanish, only Zapotec. We were all really poor. We wore white cotton pants and didn't have any shoes. All we had were little cane houses that could just blow over in the wind. I worked at the Rosario Hacienda. Pure physical labor, that's what I did. All day long. When Cárdenas came here he said ,"Down with the rich and up with the poor." He was with Emiliano Zapata. He and Zapata were for the poor people. Zapata was the one who had the idea about taking the land away from the hacendados. Zapata suffered for us. He gave his blood so that the campesinos would have some land to work.

Mario told this story as men and women were gathering for an ejido assembly to work out details for measuring individual plots as part of the certification process. Several other men and women sitting nearby nodded and concurred about the importance of Zapata and Cárdenas. "We will never forget them," several chimed in.

Mario's description makes a strong link between being "*puros indios*" (pure Indians) and extreme poverty. The liberation brought by Zapata and the ejido facilitated by Cárdenas (who was still a general and not president then) are cited in the community of El Tule as a critical step which began to lift the community out of poverty and allowed it to shed its image as a town of poor, barefoot, non-Spanish speaking Zapotec Indians. The story is repeated by people as young as 20 or 25 years old as part of their cultural history. For younger ejidatarios, this story is part of their identity in belonging to the ejido even if their experience of being an ejidatarios is very different from that of Mario who was wounded in the struggle for land in El Tule.

The hacendados holding what became the ejido land for El Tule were driven out by campesinos rushing in with their machetes and rifles when they heard that the governor was going to approve their petition for ejido land. In San Dionisio, one of the original agitators for the ejido was detained by security guards of a local hacendado and had his ear cut off. Other members of the community were repeatedly shot at. In Unión Zapata, local hacendados tried repeatedly to bribe ejido organizers. In all three communities, hacendados harassed ejidatarios for several years in their fields, attempting to continue planting after their land had been expropriated.

The historical links between the original struggle for ejido land and the current danger that it may be privatized and disappear are best reflected in the remarks of Jose Martinez, an 80-year-old ejidatario from El Tule. Jose demonstrates an acute awareness of both history and current events as he reflects on the Porfiriato period and on the negotiations over the NAFTA which were in the headlines on a daily basis during the summer 1993. He also invokes the heroic role of Zapata in securing land.

> All the land that is now part of the ejido used to be private property. Before, people in El Tule were really poor. All they could do was to sell their labor. They also sold their land if they had any. If someone was sick and they died, where were the poor people going to go to get money to bury them? They would go to the rich and borrow money from them. Then the rich would buy their land. In Lachigolo they lost all of their land. Here too. Then they passed a law to take away all of the land from the hacienda. We got our ejido. Now they still want to take it away. Even after we got the land, the hacendados still tried to take it away.
>
> We would find them with their oxen working on our ejido land. We had to run them off the land. We suffered a lot getting rid of these people. The people from the hacienda had the federal forces on their side. Zapata was the one who helped the poor. He had to force the hacendados out. All of the poor were on the side of Zapata. The hacendados were with the rich. They killed a lot of poor people to hang onto their land. . .

> Probably the government of the United States is speaking with the Mexican government. That's what they say. . . The government of the United States wants to expand its territory. The United States has a lot of people and it needs more land. They are going to come here from the United States to buy our land. And who isn't going to sell to them? If they pay a high enough price then people will sell. Little by little, they will buy up the ejido, just like the hacendados did before. That is what is going to happen.

After the creation of the ejidos and some initial help offered in several communities by Cárdenas after a visit in the 1930s, the opinion of those interviewed regarding the government and its programs for rural communities quickly becomes negative. In several cases, suspicions of the government were so high that questions regarding events that took place in the 1920s and 1930s regarding the formation of ejidos and their use were regarded by some people as dangerous. They thought the interviews might result in information the government would use today to take their land away. One of the consequences of doing ethnographic research in the wake of the certification program was a high level of suspicion on the part of some ejidatarios that information collected would find its way into the hands of the Procuraduría.

Older and middle-aged ejidatarios in all three communities had numerous experiences with government programs and agencies that did not deliver what they had promised. A typical experience is reflected by Pedro García Sánchez, a 68 year-old ejidatario in Unión Zapata.

> The last good thing the government did was make the ejido. Where can I start? The CNC comes here, they write down people's names, collect dues, and then nothing happens. They came here to start a women's project. They said that they were going to have a sewing class. They came here and asked people to sign their papers and then they wanted us to pay membership once a month for the services they were offering. The same thing with a program to teach the girls a little bit about health. They just come to collect money, shuffle their papers, and nothing happens. I refused to sign their papers for the women's projects. No one here did.
>
> Then came the CONASUPO.[8] They came here from the CONASUPO program and told us that we should get a house ready to become a store. So in the municipio we rented a house and we fixed it up with a cement floor and redid the walls. They came and told us that on a certain date that the goods would arrive for the store. They never did. Then two years later the person in charge of the CONASUPO in Oaxaca came and was surprised that the goods hadn't arrived.
>
> No. We don't really need any help from the government because they just want us to sign papers and then nothing happens. The Ministry of Agriculture did the

[8] Author's note: *Compania Nacional de Subsistencias Populares* (National Basic Foods Company).

same thing to us. The supervisor of I don't know what - tomatoes or alfalfa - came here and he started charging people for what they would get. But nothing came of it. There was another one who came saying they were going to give chickens and turkeys to the women to raise - but nothing ever came of it. They just left.

The political candidates are the same. One time there was a candidate for governor. They sent buses to take us to see him. We all got on the bus and went to Oaxaca. They had us waiting outside in the hot sun, shut inside of an enclosure like animals. Inside the hotel where the candidate was going to speak it was much cooler. People wearing suits and ties started coming and they let them in, no problem. We just stayed out there in the hot sun in the middle of the day. The candidate rushed past us into the hotel and there we stayed. Now when they call us to go and hear some candidate we don't go. What for? This is our experience with the government.

Pedro's litany of the failure of more than forty years of government program's crystallizes the attitudes of many rural men and women interviewed toward government officials and programs. People in the ejidos assume a passive position in which they humor government officials, sign their papers, hope that maybe something will happen, but do not really expect anything. They have approached the certification program with the same attitude. While agreeing to sign on to the program, their behavior has been a mixture of resistance and accommodation.

The following partial transcript of an ejido assembly in the community of El Tule further illustrates the ambiguity of ejidatarios regarding the government and its agencies. Presently situated between a gas storage and distribution facility and a large PEMEX depository located on its ejido, El Tule has been the recipient of numerous requests for additional tracts of ejido land. Their past experience with PEMEX resulted in very low prices for land that is now worth a great deal more. In addition, the ejidatarios sense of physical danger has greatly dampened their enthusiasm for additional industrial projects. In 1993 the ejido turned down a proposal for an additional gas storage site in the community and also decided to deny PEMEX a perimeter of 500 meters of ejido land they requested on all sides of their plant to prevent ground-leaking of oil into ejido plots. In the process of discussing the PEMEX proposal, strong feelings were voiced by ejidatarios about their land and its future. These types of discussions and the perceived competition for their land may have served to heighten suspicion of the certification program and its ends. The following transcript from a portion of an ejido assembly captures the spirit of these feelings.

Presidente: PEMEX is saying that we have to leave 500 meters of room as a buffer zone between the depository and the ejido. They say it is to prevent polluted ejido plots and crops. I talked with the presidente of Lachigolo and I know that they decided not to go along with this proposal. We don't have to agree with it either. We just have to discuss it and decide whether or not we are going to have this kind of agreement with PEMEX. What do you think about this?

Ejidatario #1: They probably just want to expropriate our land. That is why they are talking about pollution.

Presidente: As I said, the president of Lachigolo's ejido[9] said they wouldn't give the 500 meter buffer zone to PEMEX.

Ejidatario #2: We have to take care of our ejido land because the strategy of President Salinas is clear. We have to be ready to defend our land. The free trade agreement and the certification program mean that a lot of private contractors are going to be interested in our land because it is close to Oaxaca and in an urbanized area.

Presidente: That's right. What the compañero says is right. When you get your titles, please don't sell the land. We need to keep the ejido together. We don't have to accept the proposal of PEMEX.

Ejidatario #3: We should all join together and oppose PEMEX. We don't have to accept this.

Ejidatario #4: When PEMEX expropriated our land before they didn't pay every much. They didn't pay us for the harvest we lost.

Ejidatario #5: Yes, let's oppose their proposal.

Presidente: What does the assembly say?

Everyone begins talking at once, turning to their neighbors in informal discussion. The men to the right of the autoridades are talking to one another in very emotional tones. The women talk to each other and listen. Every once in a while they stand up and shout in agreement or shout during the group discussion.

Presidente (tapping on the table for everyone's attention): Well, I will tell PEMEX we are not in agreement with them. We won't give them the 500 meter buffer zone.

"Yes, yes," shouts everyone in agreement, standing and applauding.

While Pemex's proposal was advanced on ecological grounds, it was interpreted by ejidatarios as a threat to expropriate their ejido land and undermine local control of the future of the ejido. While ejidatarios and ejidatarias of El Tule agreed to enter the government certification program, their ambiguity remains clear. The ideas expressed at the ejido assembly cited above were stated boldly because the assembly did not include personnel from the Procuraduría's office. They

[9] Lachigolo is a neighboring Zapotec community bordering El Tule's ejido land.

had not been informed about the meeting. In their absence the nature of the public discourse about the ejido reform and the relationship of the ejido to outside agencies shifted from compliance to defiance. This was reflected continually in private conversations with ejidatarios as well.

An older ejido official in Unión Zapata expressed his doubts about the certification program even though he has publicly worked with officials from the Procuraduría.

> Well, now we are realizing what the Certification Program is all about. They are going to tax people in the ejidos. Now they say that it will be the same tax, but what about the next president after Salinas? He doesn't have much time left. What will happen with the new president? He can easily change the law again and raise taxes.
>
> I didn't want to enter this process originally. I spoke against it in the assembly, but the others were convinced. When the people came from the Procuraduría the ejidatarios were brainwashed, "Se lavo el cerebro." Now it is too late." I checked and they say that there won't be taxes on our ejido land, but what about our house lots? They are going to tax them like private property. I know that they are going to tax people. Look at how much money the government is spending on this program. The young lady who is our visitador comes here three times a week. Every time she comes I sign her papers to prove that she was here so that she can get paid. They are spending a lot of money on her and other people like her. Don't tell me the government isn't going to get that money back. They don't set up a program, spend lots of money and then try not to regain their investment. No. They want to get something out of this from the campesinos.

Other ejidatarios interviewed also expressed doubts that the program would simply result in benefits. Many found that when the engineers and surveyors actually arrived from INEGI and started measuring land that disputes emerged within families and/or neighboring ejidatarios. In El Tule, ejido assemblies were increasingly occupied with settling family disputes over possession, questions about what to do with the land of migrants who were in the United States, and how to get people to show up when their parcels were being measured. These concerns are reflected by Sara López Sánchez a 50-year-old ejidataria from El Tule who is fighting with a sibling over parcels of land her father had rights to.

> I don't think this new law is a good idea. Now the government comes and measures the land. They never did that before, not since the ejido was formed. Why do it now? I think that with time, the government is going to try and take over the land. They are just creating problems now. You saw how in the ejido meeting people were talking about just sitting on their land and not letting them come to measure. And taxes. Who knows what kinds of taxes we will get hit with. . . It's also creating a lot of problems in families, like in mine.

While their fears for the future are not expressed openly to officials from the Procuraduría Agraria, many middle aged and elderly ejidatarios interviewed privately reflected on the possibility that the ejido would fall apart because younger people would sell the land or put houses on it rather than continue to work it as farmland. Their strong ties to the history of struggle for the land combined with their historical distrust of the government informed these concerns. Says Teresa Moreno Martínez, a 53-year-old ejidataria from El Tule:

> I can't speak for my children, but I will try to protect the ejido and the land, not sell it. But my children may want to turn their pieces into house lots or sell them. For example, my son who is in Mexico, will have the right to sell his share to one of his siblings.

To some degree these fears are well-founded. Twelve younger people ages 20-35 (six women and six men) interviewed in-depth in the three case study communities expressed a great deal of uncertainty about whether or not they would continue to farm ejido land if given the chance. Many expressed feelings of loyalty to their families and to their ejidos, but in the same sentence detailed how important it was to look beyond their communities for a source of income.

Julia Martínez, 26 years old, believes she will be named as a legal successor to her grandmother who is an ejiditaria in Unión Zapata. A single mother with a three year-old, Julia recently returned from living four years in Los Angeles where she worked most of the time at a Pizza Hut owned by a Pakistani family. She has two brothers and several cousins who are still living in the Los Angeles area.

> My grandmother says that she is going to give me some land. We are each supposed to receive a piece of land, me and her sons. I grew up with her. I would like to continue farming for her sake, for her memory, but I don't really know if I will be able to. In some ways its easier to return to Los Angeles. At least I know I can earn a living there.

Julia's statement captures the ambiguous position of many young people in the three ejido communities studied. While most have grown up in a rural community with parents who worked the land for a living as ejidatarios, they have ended up contributing to their family's income through a variety of paid work activities. In the case of Julia this included making cheese and selling it in neighboring Mitla, raising and selling animals, working as a domestic worker, and working at a Pizza Hut. Each of these work experiences has brought a different set of social relations with it and has exposed her to a range of ideas and identities that vary dramatically from those of her parents. By age 23 she had been a campesina and domestic worker in Mexico and a minimum wage earning worker in Los Angeles. In Oaxaca she had been classified as a poor mestiza campesina, in Los Angeles as a part Indian, poor Mexican working illegally for a living. All of these experiences inform her general perspective on life and her attitudes about her future as an ejidataria in Unión Zapata.

While both the older and the younger generation of ejidatarios in the three communities studied have some common transnational experience of migration, the degree to which that has permeated their lives is significantly different. Migration in the three case study communities involves two separate flows, corresponding with generational differences. One-third to one-half of current male ejidatarios in the three case study communities migrated to the United States as part of the U.S. bracero program. They worked in different parts of the United States and in agriculture as well as in industry. Few of them appear to have stayed in the United States, establishing permanent residence. Most returned after a six month contract to continuing working in their ejido land. Some returned to work for an additional contract period. The second flow of migrants are young people from 15 to 30 who have grown up considering migration to be a permanent economic strategy. They also conceive of the boundaries of their community as stretching well into the United States, particularly to the Los Angeles area where some community members have settled.

In contrast to the current generation of migrants who often undertake their journey at the suggestion of a friend or relative already established in the United States, older braceros were actively recruited in Oaxaca. Going to the United States was not known as a viable economic strategy and many had to be convinced of the benefits of leaving their ejido land. Says Mauricio Santaigo García of El Tule:

> The contractors came all the way to Oaxaca. This is how I happened to go. I was walking past the Virgin de la Soledad, you know, the patron Saint of Oaxaca, when I went by a military barracks. These soldiers shouted out to me, "Don't you want to get contracted?" I went over to see what they were shouting about. They took me inside and medically examined me. I wasn't sick with anything. Then they gave me a receipt for such and such a day to get the train to Irajuato. I was thirty years old. This was in 1945. When we got to Irajuato they filled out legal papers for us. How old were we? How many children did we have? What was the name of our wife? They examined us again. That's how they made the contracts. I went for six months. I went again in 1950 to Texas. I worked harvesting oranges. The first time I went to California. Then I came back to just be a regular campesino. At least I know my land is here.

While migrants in other nearby communities such as Teotitlán del Valle migrated first as braceros, stayed, and eventually established residence (Stephen 1991), this does not appear to be the pattern for the three case study communities. Longer-term stays in the United States are associated with the current generation of migrants who began to leave their communities in the mid-1980s.

Interviews indicate that roughly about one-third of the households in the case study communities have young people who are currently in the United States or have migrated in the past three years. In Unión Zapata, for example, that is about 33 out of 106 households. Children of ejidatarios between the ages of 16 and 30 expressed intense interest about migrating to the United

States. Most have family members and friends who have been to the United States and they see it as an important employment option. Young women as well as young men are crossing the border to try their luck. In the past few years in Unión Zapata, almost half of the young people who have migrated to the Los Angeles area have been young women. It has been suggested that rural women make up at least 15 percent of migrants to the United States (Robles, Aranda, and Botey 1993, p. 27).

The second wave of migration that began in the mid-1980s has a large number of future ejidatarios in it. Interviews with these young people suggest that they do not view migration as a one-time employment strategy, but as a long-term option. If they continue to migrate in slowly increasing numbers this will surely influence their treatment of ejido lands. Most have been socialized as part of the wage labor force and have worked in the urban informal labor market, in light industry, and only part-time in the countryside aiding their parents. Six of the twelve had recently spent time in the United States and had siblings and cousins who also migrated.

Those most interested in continuing to farm were a few young men in Unión Zapata who had begun to produce commercial vegetables in the past few years. Marco Solis García of Union Zapata, age 25, who plants some of his father's ejido land is enthusiastic about the prospects of farming with commercial vegetables. He plants alfalfa, tomatoes, onions, and garlic twice per year on land irrigated with a well and a gas pump.

> When tomatoes do well, you can earn a lot of money. When the price for tomatoes is high, people will even come right here to the town to buy them from us. I will keep farming the land with commercial vegetables.

Several others listening to the conversation noted, however, that this year's tomato crop had been miserably small and many people had lost a lot of money.

Other young people such as Luis Hernández Santiago reflect attitudes that are a mixture of their parents skepticism towards government programs and a desire to leave the physical labor of the countryside behind.

> I don't think this certification process is so great. They have been here measuring and writing down how much land each of us had. They are going to charge us money, like private property. Maybe its better if they just leave well-enough alone. . . I don't even know if I would want to farm any land. Right now I work over in the chicken-hatching factory. I don't like being out in the hot sun. I would rather just earn cash.

Luis' statement reveals his uncertainty about continuing to farm and the importance that being able to earn cash has taken on in his life. In another conversation he passionately told me about how his relatives had fought to make their ejido land work and how hard his mother had worked when they were young children and his father was not around. While he sees the struggle for the land as part

of his family's history, he does not see a future that allows him to continue that struggle and he is aware of other possibilities that from his perspective involve less physical hardship to make a living.

An important ingredient in the worldview of younger people regarding the ejido's future is the size of the plots most of them will inherit. While the people currently designated with ejidal rights have between one-half and three hectares, many of their children will receive plots of minuscule size that are even more insufficient for farming. Younger people consistently point out that if they inherit one-half to one-quarter hectare of land, the most they can do with it is build a house or sell it to someone who wants to farm. In San Dionisio, land inheritance patterns seem to reflect a consciousness about not breaking up land into minuscule pieces. The result there, however, is that one or two siblings inherit and the others do not, leaving them to find their fortunes elsewhere.

Given the important differences in historical consciousness, labor socialization, and size of farming plots available to the two generations of ejidatarios (those above 40 and those below) large-scale selling of ejido land will most likely not take place immediately, but slowly over the next 15-20 years as younger people inherit land from their parents. While middle-aged and older ejidatarios are likely to continue farming land and to guard it for their children's inheritance, younger people have strong incentives for selling the land and continuing to work in the wage labor force. If the political situation in Mexico were to change so that further land redistribution became a possibilities, younger and future ejidatarios would undoubtedly reconsider their economic strategies. Until recently, most young people were not actively involved in the political and cultural life of their ejidos. Their energies were directed towards other income-generating strategies. The current political crisis in Mexico and renewed calls for land redistribution throughout the country may reignite some young people's interest in ejido politics.

GENDER

In 1990, more than eleven and a half million women were living in Mexico's countryside. They constituted 49.76 percent of a total rural population of 23,289,924 (Robles, Aranda, and Botey 1993, p. 26). Of these more than 23 million rural inhabitants, more than 3.5 million have individual communal and ejidal rights. While no one has counted the total number of women with ejidal rights, estimates range from 15 to 20 percent of ejidatarios.[10] A majority of rural women who live in ejidos, however, do not hold use rights.

[10] Carlota Botey noted in a presentation at the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Mexico City during August 1993 that 15-30 percent of Mexico's ejidatarios are female ejiditarias (see Botey 1993).

The 1971 Federal Agrarian Reform Law contained some potentially important changes for women in ejidos. The law demanded equal treatment of men and women in questions of land inheritance, allowed women to hold any position of authority (*cargo*) within ejidos, and called for the creation of UAIMs. In 1993 only 15 percent of Mexico's ejidos have registered UAIMs and an even smaller number are actually functioning (Robles, Aranda, and Botey 1993, p. 32). Among Oaxaca's 732 ejidos, only about 50 are listed as having active UAIMs.

The 1992 amendment to Article 27 and the new Agrarian Law most directly affect the majority of peasant women who live and work on ejido land, but who are not currently named as ejidatarios or successors. Because the certification process converts land from a family resource to individual property, women and children who are not directly named as successors will be left with what is referred to as "el derecho de tanto" (Botey 1991). This consists of the rights of family members to have the first shot at buying land if the title holder decides to sell it (Robles, Aranda, and Botey 1993, p. 32). The only route for women who are not ejidatarias to own land is through purchasing it from their husbands and other family members. Given an average rural wage of $4.00 per day, most women are unlikely to be able to purchase land.

Women interviewed in the three case study communities discussed four primary issues relating to the new law. First, those who were ejidatarias viewed the new law as partially positive because it secured their legal rights to ejido land. Several, however, were engaged in disputes with different family members about their parcels. Secondly, those women who were not ejidatarios noted that they can only benefit if their husbands died. Most hoped their husband would consult them if they wanted to sell land, but pointed out that there was no guarantee that they would do so. Thirdly, the case of the UAIM in San Dionisio reveals that women's land can be contested within ejidos both by other ejidatarios and other women. Finally, the increasing numbers of women in ejido assemblies and their stake in having their use rights certified is slowly modifying ejido political culture which has been under male authority since the inception of most ejidos. In addition, the certification process has highlighted the increasing numbers of women in ejido assemblies and women organized in UAIMs within ejidos. Ironically, their presence may be slowly changing ejido political culture which traditionally was run by male authorities at a time when the social institution of the ejido is being fractured by the long term possibility of individual titling.

As indicated in the historical sketches of the three case study communities, women have invested labor in ejido plots for most of their lives. In a national survey by SARH and the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) of 35,000 agricultural producers, 59.7 percent stated that they utilized family labor on their plots and another 30.4 percent stated that they used wage laborers in addition to family labor (SARH-CEPAL 1994). Thus more than 90 percent of those surveyed indicated that they used the labor of women and children to work the land - family labor (Robles, Aranda, and Botey 1993, p.27). Through periods of bracero migration, good harvests, and bad

harvests, women and children have labored on ejido land. They identify as much as men with the historical struggle for land. Their contributions to that struggle are still extremely vivid. Lucia Mendez Díaz of El Tule recalls:

> When my husband was off working in the United States I went out to our ejido lands every day. I worked to keep up our ejido land because we fought so hard for it. I looked after it every day.

Their investment and maintenance of the land, however, does not necessarily translate into ownership rights under the current law. Many women interviewed in the three case study communities hoped that their husbands would consult with them about how to dispose of their land, but were not confident they would. As expressed by Angela López Martínez, an elderly woman in Unión Zapata:

> I might not agree with what he decides, but because he is a man, what can I do? He will do what he wants.

Women were particularly concerned with what might happen if their husbands made a decision while drinking and promised to sell their ejido land. When confronted with this type of scenario, workers in the Procuraduría Agraria responded that such a person could always plead her case to the ejido assembly since an individual cannot sell their individual plot without the permission of a 50 percent plus one majority of the ejido assembly. Few women, however, would be likely to carry it to that extreme or to the next step of going to a court.

Women ejidatarias have also found that the certification process can accelerate disputes about their rights to land. In a few interviews, ejidatarias mentioned that their brothers were trying to take away some of their land. Because women often have to pay someone to do plowing for them, they may not be able to afford to work all of their ejido land. They may loan it out to brothers or other male relatives to work for them. Since consistent occupation of land gives someone the upper-hand in declaring certification under the new law, some women have been deprived of land. The certification process may be accelerating this type of conflict. María García Lopez of El Tule explains:

> When my father was really old and tired, my brother started going a medias with him on the land and then he just kept occupying it. That is how he got the land. I got called in by the Agrarian Commission in 1990. We resolved the dispute. I received 3 pieces of land and he got five pieces. I have 2 hectares and one little piece with alfalfa. My brother got most of it. Now he wants to try and get more of my land because I can't always work all of it. It never stops.

The certification process is not only accelerating land conflicts among men and women, but between women as well. In San Dionisio Ocotlán, a large group of women led by a interim president is currently fighting with four women led by a former UAIM president for titling rights to several pieces of land. Some women in the larger group are sure that the contestation was provoked by the new law. Their collective farming has been stalled by the process and they are disappointed that they have been unable to plant this year. Cristina Perez, a single mother, age 41 states:

> We got a lot of corn from our hard work last year. We want to work again this year and would have if there hadn't been this problem of the other group of women contesting our land. We really enjoyed working together. We don't pay attention to what people say to us. We are modern women. We went out there with our machetes to cut down tree for firewood and anyone who got in our way. No one could stop us when we went to work.

While the 18-20 women united in the larger UAIM have begun a dialogue with the SRA to resolve who the legitimate president is, the men in the ejido treat the whole dispute as a joke. The fact that women in the UAIM were taken seriously by the SRA and have developed a strong presence in the ejido through their UAIM is threatening to some men who have controlled this local political arena since its inception. The strategy of male ejido authorities for not dealing with the women was first to ignore them. Other strategies were to discredit the women as indecisive and childlike or to declare the problem as a result of insufficient male supervision in the home.

After women in the large group had received confirmation from the SRA that their president was legitimate, they tried to organize a meeting with the larger ejido to get this recognized internally and voted on in an assembly. Their request was ignored by the ejido leadership. Two of the ejido authorities openly made fun of the women in the UAIM as being too disorganized to ever do anything - despite their successful harvest six months earlier. One authority blamed it on the fact that there are too many widows and single women in the group. He said:

> If they were married women then their men would watch out for them and see what is happening. They would tell them how to work together. The problem is that a lot of them are alone with no man around.

In fact, a majority of women in the UAIM are married. Two of them have husbands who migrate for six months a year to the United States.

The discomfort of male ejido authorities in handling the situation in the face of self-confident organizing by UAIM members highlights the gendered political tension being generated. The PROCEDE aggravates this tension by giving women high stakes for claiming land as part of their UAIM since they are left out as ejidatarias. For women in the UAIM it is their only chance to claim ejido resources on a permanent basis if they are not slated to receive ejido rights and under the

PROCEDE individual land titles. Men who do not have ejido land but would like to may see the claims of the UAIM as taking up ejido land they could eventually receive.

Ultimately the decision about who to recognize as the legal president of the UAIM and whether to allow one group of women to receive title to their land as a UAIM will lie with the ejido assembly. A majority of people in the assembly are male. Women in the UAIM do not have voting privileges in the assembly and will depend on the ejidatarios to vote in their favor. Some men feel that neither group of women should be granted the land and it should be given to a more deserving male ejidatario.

The San Dionisio UAIM is not the only one in Oaxaca with internal disputes over their plots. Antolina Méndez Guttíerez, who works in what used to be the Feminine Ministry of the CNC and is now part of the section for youth, women, and wage workers, explained that there are six or seven UAIMs in central Oaxaca who have legal disputes with their ejidos for possession of their plots or capital improvements they made.

> There have been a lot of problems with the ejidos letting UAIMs have access to their resources. In some cases the assembly didn't approve giving the UAIM a piece of land in the first place. When they did get land then their credits wouldn't arrive. They would stay in the hands of male ejidatarios. There are a lot of internal problems with UAIMs in spite of the fact that they exist as legal entities. Ejidos don't make UAIMs a priority.

While UAIMs are often engaged in bitter fights exaggerated by the measuring process, in ejidos where the number of women participating as ejidatarias has reached a critical mass of 20 percent or more, their presence may be having some effect on opening up ejido political culture to include participation by women. This can have a spillover effect on women participating in other traditionally all-male forums such as community political assemblies at the community (*agencia*) and municipal levels.

The steady increase in the numbers of women who have gained ejidal rights since the 1930s is diversifying the population of ejidatarios in Mexico. In El Tule, women make up well over 25 percent of ejido assembly participants. They tend to sit in gender-segregated sections and to have a different style of participating in meetings than men. Ejido assemblies periodically break down into informal discussion for five to ten minute periods. During these periods, participants turn to one another and discuss the point at hand. In El Tule, women discussed issues with other women sitting nearby as did men. When the meeting assumed a formal tone with people raising their hands to speak, men would reflect back to the larger group their points of discussion. Women seldom did this, only occasionally shouting agreement with someone else. They did, however, thoroughly discuss things with other ejidatarias in the informal discussion periods and voted on all matters. Because of

their tradition of attending ejido meetings, women also go to municipal assemblies, a somewhat rare occurrence in most Oaxaca communities.

While women clearly participate less in the formal part of ejido meetings, they are present at the meetings and speak with one another. This style of participation is consistent with other cultural models of female politics observed in Yalalag and in women's political discussions at fiestas in Oaxaca valley communities (Stephen 1991). The gender segregated space of the meeting is also consistent with gender segregation of most public spaces in Oaxaca valley communities. Women who attend the meetings clearly feel that they are participating and that their presence is important. Isabel Santiago Lopez, a 59 year-old ejiditaria from El Tule describes her feelings at ejido assemblies.

> Well, the women go more to listen, to be there and to know about anything that comes up. For example, from the meeting last Sunday, we know that they are going to fine us if we don't show up while they are doing the measuring. . . If women have problems then they speak up, but mostly it is the men who are speaking up in public meetings. But they respect us. I think they respect women even more than men.

The continuously increasing presence and participation of women in ejido meetings is an important change in the political cultural of many rural communities. The problem comes, however, for those women who are not ejidatarias and who have others making decisions for them.

Officials involved with the certification program tend to overlook this fact. In an interview about the potential effect of the new law on women in ejidos in Oaxaca, Procurador Carlos Moreno said the following.

> The law will restore democracy and give legal security to women. For example, when a woman is an ejiditaria, and she starts to get old and weak, the president of the ejido would often give her parcel to someone else on the assumption that she couldn't work it. With this new certification program, the president of the ejido doesn't have the right to do that. Now conditions exist so that the woman can defend her rights and hang onto her land.

He was then pressed to comment on the law's effect on married women who were not named as ejidatarias.

> Well, they could participate in a UAIM. They could also negotiate access to the land through someone else.

Roberto Olivares, the state delegate from Oaxaca for the SRA acknowledged that the new law can be problematic for women, but stated that it was up to individual ejidos to determine how to include women in the decision-making process. Under the new law, each ejido can determine its

own internal bylaws. Such bylaws could include giving non-ejidatario youth and women a voice in decision-making. Baitenmann (1993) documented the case of one ejido in El Rosario, Veracruz which specified in their internal bylaws that any ejido land bought, sold or donated by ejidatarios would need the approval of the spouse and children. If the transaction did not have their approval it could be annulled. This protects the interests of widows, women, and children. It is an unusual occurrence.

As Olivares acknowledges, however, this is unlikely to happen in most ejidos without special encouragement.

> Ejidos can give women and others, the youth, more of a role within their internal structure. If we are going to be responsible about this, however, we have to help people to write good internal bylaws. . . It's true that people seldom consider women's opinion. But if they have internal bylaws that say they need to, maybe women would have more of a voice. We should work with them so that they listen to women.

At present there are no plans in the Procuraduría to instruct ejidos in how to structure internal bylaws to better include the participation of women and young people. In the official literature of the Procuraduría Agraria, women are noted only in reference to how the program will benefit "hombres y mujeres del campo mexicano" (men and women in the Mexican countryside) and how the program will coordinate with PRONASOL "which is taking on the situation of those groups that require special attention: residents, women, indigenous people, and workers affected by the most severe social problems" (Warman 1993, p.5). Women are periodically named as social actors who will benefit from the program, but there is no consideration of the reality that most women do not have a formal role in the ejido political structure.

While the certification program does guarantee some legal security for those women named as ejidatarias and successors, for the majority of rural women, the new law sets up a decision-making process that excludes them from deciding how to dispose of land that they have invested years and years of hard work in. They have little leverage for changing the process and/or local political culture. However, the increasing number of women who are ejidatarias along with the presence of UAIMs is bringing a gendered difference in political style to the surface and challenging the role of absolute male authority and participation in some ejidos.

CONCLUSIONS: ON ACCOMMODATION AND RESISTANCE

The dismantling of agrarian reform laws written shortly after the Mexican Revolution is nothing short of revolutionary. Disenchantment with formal development projects, economic crisis, and nation-building led the Mexican government to scale down and pull out of many activities aimed at the rural population during the 1980s. As pointed by Arturo Escobar, the response of Latin America's elite to the economic crisis of the 1980s has been to "advocate the further transnationalization of the economy and the dismantling of the state in the name of (market) neoliberalism and individual (economic) freedom" (1992, p.68). The ejido reform program in Mexico is clearly consistent with this agenda. Visible responses to the certification program in the three case study communities studied include the following:

(1) The certification program seems to be speeding up what may have been an inevitable decline in ejido social organization. Major differences in the identities and economic strategies of present and future suggest that even without the certification program, the ejido would be unlikely to continue as it has since the 1920s and 1930s.

(2) The certification program may be further fracturing the social organization of ejidos by highlighting multiple levels of conflict as borders between communities and individual parcels are measured, in some cases for the first time. Internal conflicts within ejidos and even between family members and women with different claims to UAIM land are a predictable outcome of entering the process.

(3) The most important factor to consider in analyzing responses to the agrarian restructuring program is generational experience. Older ejidatarios seem more likely to retain their land and continue working as farmers than younger ejidatarios and their offspring. Younger ejidatarios have a weaker connection to the history of the ejido, were socialized as wage laborers, and have an increasing interest in migration as an economic strategy.

(4) While the new law offers some legal protection to those 15 to 30 percent of ejidatarias who are women, for the majority of rural women, the certification process continues the tendency to limit their access to land. Their entrance into the rural wage labor force and the urban informal economy will continue. This will be particularly true for younger women. Rates of migration for rural women, both within Mexico and to the United States, will certainly increase.

(5) Major shifts in local land holdings are unlikely to be visible for ten to fifteen years. When they are, those who have more land and resources to begin with will likely take advantage of land released for sale.

(6) While a significant transfer of land may take place in the future within communities, some will continue to work the land. This is likely to result in a reduction in the amount of

former ejido land devoted to farming, but ejidos will not completely disappear in the case study communities.

While such political and economic predictions seem logical to make, the Zapatista rebellion in Mexico requires us to dig much deeper and contemplate the beliefs and practices of rural Mexicans which normally remain below the surface. The rebellion in Chiapas forever changed the landscape of agrarian politics. While ejidos did not appear to be moving quickly through the certification process of the PROCEDE in 1993, they were believed to be nonetheless plodding through. The clarion cry of the Zapatistas and their demands for land redistribution have complicated the possibilities of completion of the certification plan for both the bureaucrats charged with carrying it out and for ejidatarios who are enrolled in the program.

Participating in the certification program crystallized people's relationships to the land as they were forced to confront history through demarcating boundaries within and between communities. In the process the historical memory of the bitter struggle and sacrifice for land was thrown up against the promise of ultimate security by individual titling and ownership. While the ejidatarios of El Tule, Unión Zapata, and San Dionisio Ocotlan were not in open rebellion, they nevertheless deeply questioned the process they were participating in and attempted to exercise control over it from within. Within this process the historical memory and symbol of Emiliano Zapata and Lázaro Cárdenas are still writ large in local ejido culture. Their memory is invoked in questioning the current government policy albeit from a position of accommodation and participation.

In a discussion titled, "Beyond the Politics of Resistance," Jean Comaraff has written:

> The *realpolitik* of oppression dictates that resistance be expressed in domains seemingly apolitical, and the dynamics of resistance among oppressed people elsewhere have shown that the connection between seemingly unworldly powers and movements and the politics of liberation is subtle and various, denying simply dichotomization in terms of resistance and compliance (1985, pp. 261-262).

The sources and subtleties of resistance within a framework of accommodation are illustrated by the ejidatarios profiled here. The most vivid of these points of resistance is the already discussed historical memory of agrarian struggle articulated by older ejidatarios. Another point of resistance is by those young people who have already checked out of the ejido and who have an ambiguous relationship with their agrarian heritage. They are resisting a life of poverty on little or no land with no employment opportunities by migrating to the United States and elsewhere in Mexico. Gendered resistance to the process comes particularly from women who have little potential for ever owning ejido land as well as well as those organized into UAIMs who want to hang onto their claims. Women are also resisting and changing ejido political culture as they participate with a different style than men.

The contradictory strategies of resistance and accommodation exhibited by people in the three ejidos captures the complexity of most rural Mexicans who are living as a unified reality two worlds which have traditionally been dichotomized between the urban and the rural, the traditional and the modern, the peasant and the urban worker. The fact that ejidatarios in Oaxaca have been able to integrate two worlds viewed as separate is a testimony to the complexity of Mexican rural society. The worldview of ejidatarios such as those explored is an example of those many Mexicans who are not in open rebellion, but support the demands of the Zapatistas because they strike a chord of reality. They represent perhaps the large "silent majority" who see a piece of themselves represented in the actions and demands of the Zapatistas. Having now seen a piece of themselves take on a power position in the mainstream political arena of Mexico, they may rethink the nature of their participation in agrarian politics. They are likely to join with the hundreds of peasant and indigenous organizations that are using the political opening created by the Zapatistas to pressure the government to distribute more resources to the countryside and take responsibility for the difficult and often devastating human consequences of economic restructuring and trade liberalization.

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