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Household Diversification and Children's Economic Socialization: An Examination of In-Home Businesses Among Urban Mexican Families

Author

Marti, Frances Alethea

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Household Diversification and Children's Economic Socialization: An Examination of In-Home Businesses Among Urban Mexican Families

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

by

Frances Alethea Marti

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Household Diversification and Children's Economic Socialization:

An Examination of In-Home Businesses

Among Urban Mexican Families

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Frances Alethea Marti

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Elinor Ochs, Chair

This dissertation examines the lives and livelihoods of urban Mexican entrepreneurial mothers: women who balance income and children by engaging in multiple small, self-initiated economic activities that allow them the time and flexibility to care for their families. Research is based on interviews and recorded observations of the daily family life of urban families with in-home micro-retail businesses in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas. I examine day-to-day economic strategizing, how integration into social networks provides economic and emotional resources as well as creating social and financial responsibility toward others, and how children incorporate themselves into parents' economic activities and linguistically demonstrate expertise and identity in the domain of the home store. The micro-retail store is used as focal point, examining its role as one element in a diversified household economy, and as site of intersection between individual responsibility and intra-household aid for both adults and children. The store is an ideal choice for this study because of its physical presence in the home space, its

accessibility to child observation, and its relative permanence as an ongoing business whose activities can be easily observed.

Contrary to expectation, children are not regular workers in such businesses, but rather self-initiate their own forms of participation, which include observation of parents' activities, taking on peripheral roles, and occasionally tending customers on their own. Linguistic examination of the micro-interactional structure of store transactions reveals how participants index context-specific relationships between vendors and customers who are also neighbors, friends, or kin. These kin and social networks serve as an economic and social safety net but also entail responsibility toward others. I highlight how money and family are closely tied in this community, as in the tradition of multiple-compadrazgo to finance celebrations of life events and in day-to-day reliance on family networks for needed skills and resources.

The ways in which economic strategizing play out in everyday life, and their impact on the everyday socialization of young children, are topics in need of further research. This study aims to fill in that gap by making use of extended observations of daily routines (both audio and video-recorded) with families over an extended period of time, and by addressing how social and economic relationships are linguistically enacted in everyday life through store transactions, mother-child discussions, and narratives about economic decision-making.

The dissertation of Frances Alethea Marti is approved.

Marjorie H. Goodwin

Yunxiang Yan

Patricia M. Greenfield

Elinor Ochs, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

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VITA

1997-2002	BA in Cognitive Science; emphasis in Computational Modeling Minor in Anthropology University of California, Berkeley
2004	Research Assistant (*summer*) Center on the Everyday Lives of Families University of California, Los Angeles
2004-2005	Departmental Fellowship Department of Anthropology University of California, Los Angeles
2004-2005 & 2007-2008	Webmaster: Center for Language, Interaction and Culture: Graduate Student Assn University of California, Los Angeles
2004-2012	Pre-doctoral Trainee: Center for Culture, Brain and Development University of California, Los Angeles / Foundation for Psychocultural Research
2004	MA Fieldwork and Language Learning (*summer*) Nabenchauk, Zinacantán and San Cristobal de las Casas; Chiapas, Mexico UCLA Foreign Language and Area Studies: Summer Language Fellowship
2005	Honorable Mention: NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program
2005	MA Fieldwork (*summer*) Nabenchauk, Zinacantán & San Cristobal de las Casas; Chiapas, Mexico UCLA-FPR Center for Culture, Brain and Development Seed Grant
2005-2006	Predoctoral Fellowship: Center for Culture, Brain and Development University of California, Los Angeles / Foundation for Psychocultural Research
2006	MA Fieldwork Nabenchauk, Zinacantán and San Cristobal de las Casas; Chiapas, Mexico
2006	Graduate Research Summer Mentorship University of California, Los Angeles
2006-2007 & 2008 & 2010	Teaching Assistant Department of Anthropology University of California, Los Angeles
2007	MA in Anthropology University of California, Los Angeles
2007 & 2008	PhD Fieldwork (*summer*) San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico UCLA Department of Anthropology Summer Fieldwork Grant UCLA International Institute Summer Fieldwork Fellowship

2009-2010 & 2011-2012	Assistant Webmaster Center for Language, Interaction and Culture Graduate Student Assn University of California, Los Angeles
2009	PhD Fieldwork San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico UCLA-FPR Center for Culture, Brain and Development Research Grant
2010	Summer Lecturer Department of Anthropology University of California, Los Angeles
2010-2012	Digital Media Lab Coordinator/Liaison Departments of Anthropology and Sociology University of California, Los Angeles
2011-2012	Dissertation Year Fellowship Center for Culture, Brain and Development University of California, Los Angeles / Foundation for Psychocultural Research

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

In Press: Martí, F. Alethea. The Logic of (Mis)Behavior: Peer Socialization through Assessments among Zinacantec Youth. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*.

2011 Martí, F. Alethea Quieren Comprar! (They want to buy): Children's Participation In and Socialization Around Family Home Businesses In Urban Chiapas, Mexico. Poster presented at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting; Montreal QC Canada.

2011 Martí, F. Alethea. Language Socialization Methodologies: With Examples from Zinacantán and San Cristobal. Invited Speaker, UC Berkeley Fieldwork Forum.

2011 Martí, F. Alethea. The Logic of Proper Behavior: Peer Construction of Moral Norms among Zinacantec Maya Young Women. Paper presented at the Society for the Anthropological Sciences/Society for Cross Cultural Research/AAA Children & Childhood Interest Group Annual Meeting; Charleston, SC.

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2008 Martí, F. Alethea. Mi ja' chak'an? Do you want it like that?: Peer socialization of economic and moral norms among Zinacantec Maya women. Poster presented at Society for Economic Anthropology Annual Meeting; Cincinnati OH.

CHAPTER 1: The Entrepreneurial Mother

I. A TYPICAL DAY

In a residential *barrio* in the city of San Cristobal de las Casas, in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, Doña[1] Francisca[2] makes two breakfasts every morning. The first is for her husband, who works as a distributor for a wholesale office supply company and leaves the house at 9am. Afterwards she cooks another meal for herself, her two daughters and whatever lodgers she may have living with her. She never has more than two, she says: young foreign students who are sent to her by the summer language center or volunteers who find her through personal networks. Doña Francisca has stories of her many adopted "children" who have passed through her home and her life. In her youth she wanted to travel to the U.S., she says, to see new places and meet new people. But this way she has been able to meet people from all over the world.

After washing the breakfast dishes with buckets of water hauled from the cistern in the back yard she spends the rest of the morning and early afternoon doing whatever chores need taking care of. Often she heads to the market to buy groceries, fresh produce, or meat for the midday meal, accompanied sometimes by one of her daughters. Or she may call on a friend who has borrowed her catalogs. Doña Francisca sells Avon, Fuller and a number of other cosmetic brands; her catalogs are passed from hand to hand among the families of her regular clients, who note in the margins which items they want to order. She no longer needs to actively solicit sales,

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[1] The combination of Don/Doña plus a given name or nickname is a respectful form of address and reference used toward or about a neighbor or acquaintance who is married and has standing within the community. It usually correlates with the use of the formal address term *Usted* (rather than the informal *tu*) toward that person, although this does not preclude the relationship being close or of long duration (e.g. a wife toward her mother-in-law).

[2] All names are pseudonyms.

she says, because neighbors will come and ask her for the latest catalogs even if she herself is not distributing that brand. Doña Francisca tries to return home from these visits before 1pm to begin cooking but sometimes, she says, she is a little bit late.

Except for the downtown and tourist areas, most of San Cristobal closes up from 2pm to 4pm as students and workers congregate in their homes for the mid-afternoon *comida*, the main meal of the day. A street full of wall-to-wall shops and boutiques pulls in signs and shuts doors, transforming into a sleepy residential neighborhood until the evening.

After *comida*, with the kitchen once again tidy and the dishes drying on their rack, Doña Francisca walks around the corner to her *papelería* - a small stationary store located in the front room of a house she inherited from her mother. The two back rooms she rents out, and the rest of the building belongs to her brother and niece. While waiting for customers, she will do her homework – for Doña Francisca is working toward an elementary school diploma – or socialize with visiting neighbors. In the evening her husband will meet her here on his way home from work. Doña Francisca admits to me that she hasn't spent as much time in the *papelería* as she used to because of other obligations. In past years she opened at 5pm, but these days she will sometimes not arrive until 7pm. “But even if I only open for a couple hours, there are still sales,” she tells me, adding that people know her and will come by when they see she is in. Most of the sales are from neighbors, including her nieces and grand-nieces who will rush in for an urgently needed notebook or for their school assignment. A corner of her counter is devoted to more catalogs, which the nieces flip through, looking for new colors and styles. They don't have to pay until the product arrives next month, but they have never asked for credit or a family discount.[3]

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[3] In many societies there is an expectation that the prosperous will share their resources with needy kin. In her case study of a Mandok (New Guinea) entrepreneur, Pomponio (1993) describes a non-confrontational solution to this dilemma: Agnes Keke chose to build her business around gathering,

Around 8pm Doña Francisca's husband arrives and waits for her to close up the store, and sometimes a daughter may drop by as well on her way home from school. They walk home together, perhaps stopping on the way to buy a bag of *pan dulce*, assorted small sweetbreads, to eat at home. Once a week their daughter's *novio* (fiancé) brings a special-order delivery of such *pan* from his mother's bakery. At 9pm the entire family gathers for a light meal of tea or coffee and *pan*; this is a time to relax and talk about the events of the day, or to watch the news on TV. Her husband talks little but sits quietly until she affectionately scolds him for falling asleep at the table: "Go to bed, you'll give yourself a neck-ache like that!" After the family has all turned in for the night, Doña Francisca sometimes stays awake in bed, finishing up the homework she never seems to have time for in her busy day.[4]

Doña Francisca is a unique woman, but she is also in many ways a typical working mother in San Cristobal. She divides her day between caring for her home and family and engaging in a number of different small-scale entrepreneurial activities. She is not "employed" in the sense of having a salary and a regular paycheck or a full-time business to which she devotes herself. Instead, she says that she prefers being her own boss, which means running various diverse enterprises she can switch between at will. Doña Francisca contributes considerably to

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drying and exporting sea cucumbers, an international delicacy considered unpalatable by locals, who describe its taste as "somewhat like chewing on the sole of a rubber thong that has been marinated in seawater," and therefore never requested by her relatives. Since her business made use of unskilled labor, she was also able to live up to social obligations of sharing with kin by giving away paid work to anyone who asked for it.

[4] This description, taken from retrospective interviews and first-hand observation, is a composite sketch of Doña Francisca's routine from the time I first met her in 2004 until 2008. When I began doctoral research, Doña Francisca had opened an internet center in her home and spent her afternoons there. In 2009, one of her daughters married and moved into the house behind the *papelería*, which she assisted in running. Approximately two months after the end of my fieldwork, Doña Francisca's husband quit his job and, at her suggestion, took over the *papelería*, using his own networks to obtain merchandise and expanding his customer base. The varied economic career of Doña Francisca and her family serve as an illustration of the key importance of flexibility and combining multiple resources for many Mexican families.

the household[5] income, but she does so by spreading her efforts out among her "bola de negocios" (pile of businesses), as she once jokingly described it, rather than focusing them on a single enterprise. While Doña Francisca admits that part of her motivation is the enjoyment she derives from trying new projects, any woman who engages in keeping husband and children fed, clean, and healthy while at the same time working, either within or outside the hoe, must become a master at the art of juggling multiple jobs.

II. WHO IS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL MOTHER?

In this study I examine the daily routines of four "entrepreneurial mothers," as well as interviews and retrospectives with several others, [6] women like Doña Francisca who balance full-time homecare small-scale micro enterprises, and a diversity of other economic and familial responsibilities. The focal women are all primary caregivers for young or school-age children. Their husbands are employed outside the home, and in some cases outside the city. They are (or were) young mothers, ranging in age from 16 to 21 at the birth of their first child. Most of them also have extra-household support networks, in the form of relatives, in-laws, and neighbors.

All of the families followed in this study have small retail stores in their homes: the largest is Doña Angela's *farmácia* (drugstore), which takes up separate room in her house and has its own entrance next to the main gate; the smallest is Doña Elena's *abarrotes* (dried goods store) which consists of a five shelf display stand and small table set up just inside the doorway

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[5] In 2009 she calculated that her combined incomes exceeded the paycheck from her husband's full-time retail job.

[6] The participating families and the methodologies used are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Data consist of observation of daily routines of four families, extended retrospective interviews with several mothers who began engaging in small-scale economic activities when their children were young and continued to do so even after these children became adults, and informal interviews with adult relatives of the focal families, some of whom were themselves entrepreneurial daughters or daughters-in-law.

to her living room. Although the owners give their stores different names, there is considerable overlap in the merchandise sold: candy and chips bought by neighborhood children, sodas, canned goods and occasionally eggs or yogurt. The selection is based upon opportunity and access and is not limited by the genre of the store: one may find aspirin in the candy store, piñatas in the pharmacy, perfumes in the stationary store. These businesses are what Valdez (2003) terms *micro-menudeo,* micro-retail, meaning they sell necessities (and treats) in very small portions at very low prices: one egg, a single-use packet of shampoo, a single envelope of Alka-Seltzer, one diaper. Micro-retail stores of this sort are vital to low income families or those with limited budgets who cannot afford to buy goods in larger, more cost-effective quantities or (in the case of medicines) to buy more than they plan to use. "Micro-retail allows a greater movement of goods because it assures daily sales that satisfy the consumption needs of people who live day to day [...] tending to have daily incomes but very limited ones, thus being unable to purchase necessities in another form." (Valdez 2003:254, my own translation).[7] I argue that such stores are also selling convenience: their clientele consists of immediate neighbors and buying a single dose of aspirin across the street is preferable to buying a whole bottle in the drugstore across town.

The stores' eclectic inventory ties in with the concept of complementary diversification (running multiple enterprises which mutually benefit each other) to be discussed later in this chapter: as individuals engage in multiple income-generating endeavors, the physical space of the store also becomes a resource for integrating different economic projects. So a woman who sells Avon by catalog will buy a few items herself, to sell in her store with a mark-up. Or she will

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[7] "*El micro-menudeo permite un mayor desplazamiento de mercancías porque asegura una venta cotidiana que satisface las necesidades de consumo de las personas que viven al día [...]suelen tener ingresos diarios pero muy limitados, por lo que no es posible abastecerse de alimentos más que de esta forma."* (Valdez: 2003:254)

use the store as a way to sell off a piece of merchandise that a delinquent customer was unable (or unwilling) to pay for after having ordered it. In her study of Yucatec women's microenterprises, Valdez found that 43.8% of the businesses combined alternate economic activities within the same space (Valdez 2003:255).

I originally recruited these families in order to examine the balancing of retail and home activities; however I soon discovered that the stores were not the economic center of the household but instead one among several different economic endeavors. In Chapters 3 and 4, I focus in on the micro-retail business as a sample of one type of "income stream" in a diversified portfolio and how it is integrated into the economic and social life of the household as a whole, but one must keep in mind that it is only one of several simultaneous projects.

What are these multiple income streams used by families to make ends meet? In addition to the above-mentioned retail businesses, a partial list compiled from observations and interviews includes: making and selling-hand crafted jewelry or embroidery; cutting, styling and perming hair; importing shrimp for drying and reselling; selling from cosmetics catalogs (usually at least two or three at a time); selling locally produced honey on commission; running rotating credit groups known as *tandas*; running an internet center (where patrons pay by the half hour to use computers); and making custom decorations and *recuerdos* (party favors) for special events. Disparate activities are sometimes combined together, as in the aforementioned example of buying Avon merchandise for in-store resale. Sometimes the enterprises of multiple family members are combined, for instance using the store as a place to display goods bought or made by other household members, who will reap the profits if such items are sold.[8] Activities may be

[8] Examples include: two-liter soda bottles purchased by the vendor's mother-in-law (sold in an abarrotes), office supplies purchased by a husband (sold in a papelería), jewelry made by an adult daughter (sold in a

of long duration, such as Doña Francisca's *papelería* (stationary store) which I have seen managed at varying levels of effort and by varying family members since I met her in 2004 (and which is still up and running today). Or they may be short-lived, like the electronic arcade game leased by Doña Angela, which was immensely popular with neighborhood children but lasted for less than a year before she got fed up (her words) with the noise and sent it back to the company. Or, they may be sporadic and opportunity-based, as in the case of the out-of-town relatives who are asked to bring a bag of regional pastries for local sale[9] and who return home with local merchandise for their own reselling. Familial networks are often integrated into economic activities, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, and these networks of support can spread across state and even country borders.

The reasons for engaging in these activities are varied and often sporadic as well. When asked what prompted them to open their stores, the mothers in this study would respond "Oh, I just started selling a few things," or occasionally "I wanted to try something new." One interviewee explained that she had encouraged her daughter-in-law to start selling because the younger woman was at home all day caring for small children, had few local friends, and needed something to keep her occupied. In the second half of this chapter (section VII) I will connect these individual motivations with more general rationales presented in the economic and anthropological literature on the reasons for and benefits of diversification in various contexts.

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ciber center), mouthwash purchased by a pre-adolescent son (sold in a farmácia). In every case, the "owner" of the merchandise received the profits regardless of who actually made the sale.

[9] In this case it is the resale aspect I am focusing on: friends or relatives going on distant journeys are often asked to pick up goods which are more expensive or elusive back home. Because imported electronics are expensive in San Cristobal, I have received requests to transport everything from blenders to digital cameras to laptops (plus one hint about how easy it would be to bring a car across the border) always with the caveat "if I have the money for it by the time you go back to the U.S."

III. "ENTREPRENEURIAL" ASSUMPTIONS

When I began recruiting participants for my dissertation research, my goal was to examine the ways in which home entrepreneurship influences household routines and children's home socialization. Literature on child socialization among contemporary middle class United States families emphasizes children's lack of access to adult work activities (see e.g. Paugh 2005). In contrast, research in societies where children are more integrated into the adult work world demonstrates the ways in which children learn ethics of work as well as economic cognition and practices by observing and participating in adult activities from a young age (e.g. Clark 1989, Lave 1991, Ochs & Schieffelin 1984, Saxe 1988).

Having then taken for granted the centrality of the home store, the original goal of the study was to examine how children's incorporation into home businesses influenced their socialization and understanding of the skills and moral values related to economics and labor. As I followed the daily lives of four families and engaged in open-ended interviews with others, however, I discovered that what I had assumed to be a salient and central "family business" is not in fact a full-time endeavor of the entire family but rather a project belonging to the mother, and only one of several in which she is engaged. Other household members may occasionally pool their labor, but the ownership of the store, merchandise and profits belongs to the mother; income is quite small and sometimes sporadic; and store owners will readily confess to neglecting or closing the store in favor of other economic opportunities or familial responsibilities. Children participate only occasionally, and parents consider children's store help compared to other childhood responsibilities such as homework. This situation gives rise to one of the central questions of the current study: If the home store is not a primary economic resource, what role does it actually play? And what economic and social strategies and priorities

are children learning from their intermittent participation and from observation of mothers' diversified economic activities?

Although I use the term "entrepreneurial mother" to emphasize mothers' self-directed participation in economic enterprises, the strategies and goals followed by individuals (and households) profiled here do not match – and at times even contradict – supposedly "common sense" understandings of American and Western European entrepreneurship: the "by one's bootstraps" mentality which emphasizes starting small and expanding, as well as the morally laden belief that a healthy business, like a healthy plant, is constantly growing. In the following section, I will examine some of these tenets of entrepreneurship, and in sections VII and VIII contrast it with the diversification model which is actually adopted by families and households in many parts of the world (including the United States).[10]

The concept of expansion as the goal of a business has historical roots in the United States. Weber (1930) links understandings of business success with the Protestant work ethic, in which hard work and frugality are virtues in and of themselves and monetary success is seen as a symbol of such virtues. Under these conditions, gaining money becomes its own goal irrespective of the uses to which such money might be put. Such a perspective on the value of work contrasts with other viewpoints (which Weber lumps together as the "traditional" model, see Weber 1930/2002:23) in which financial gain, and the labor required to achieve it, are merely means toward a desired standard of living. From this latter point of view, paid work is only necessary in so far as provides one with the resources for living comfortably.

Weber uses this dichotomy to explain a seeming contradiction in values between employers and hourly or piece-rate laborers (e.g. in agriculture). When employers attempt to

[10] Examinations of diversification and home employment among middle-class U.S. mothers is the topic of a future research study.

increase productivity through wage raises or bonuses, they discover that their employees actually work fewer hours rather than more. In the employer's mind, time has value, and increased wages should make one's labor more valuable and more worth investing in (as opposed to engaging in other activities). In the employee's mind, the only purpose of work is to obtain a particular level of financial comfort, which can now be achieved by working fewer hours.

Either mode may be compatible with a diversification strategy. From the "traditional" perspective, having several low yield activities which can be intensified at will allows one to increase and decrease one's level of work to match the financial needs of the moment. From the "Protestant" point of view, engaging in multiple activities allows one to adjust one's activities to put more effort into the more profitable ones while retaining the others as a buffer against risky investments.

IV. "JOBLESS ENTREPRENEURS" AND "BONSAI GROWERS": ECONOMIC DEFINITIONS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In the economic and financial literature, including literature on economic models and in micro-lending, definitions of entrepreneurship focuses on two different aspects of small-business creation, innovation and persistence. Entrepreneurship can be defined as unpredictable and creative, as diligent and persistent, or as a natural strategy used by everyday people who take advantage of the opportunities given to them. But in each case there is a value-laden assumption that the goal of a small business is to grow, and a "good" entrepreneur is making this growth possible, a goal that is not necessarily held by independent businesswomen in San Cristobal or in the anthropological literature. Here I will examine the economists' image of the entrepreneur, as well as that held by financial institutions that lend to small businesses.

Recently, economists have begun to address the absence of macroeconomic models that take into account entrepreneurial activity. The difficulty in constructing such models, they argue, stems from the unpredictable nature of entrepreneurs themselves, who are seen to be both innovators and risk-takers and therefore difficult to reduce to predictive models. William Baumol, one of the key proponents of an examination of entrepreneurship in economics, defines "[t]he entrepreneur's occupation [as] the search for profitable opportunities to upset any equilibrium" (Baumol 2006:2). His image of entrepreneurship, also adopted by other researchers, presents such individuals as creatively driven and motivated by a passion for innovation rather than by financial necessity. "Because entrepreneurs are engaged in creative activities fueled by their own passions and desires, entrepreneurs don't derive negative utility from their efforts; instead, they take pleasure in making such effort" (Lowrey 2006:3). As part of special three-panel session dedicated to Baumol at the American Economics Association's 2006 conference, Lowrey links modern day entrepreneurs with Weber's image of the Protestant work ethic discussed earlier in this chapter, arguing that while money is a key part of entrepreneurship, it is viewed as a tangential reward rather than a necessity. The entrepreneur "had no wish to consume, but only to make profits." (Weber 2002:22, quoted in Lowrey 2006:7). While Weber's Protestant entrepreneur viewed wealth as a reward for, and a symbol of, his moral virtue, Lowrey and Baumol's framing focuses on the creative satisfaction of the entrepreneur at seeing his or her plans become reality.

In this framing, the entrepreneur is presented as a creative visionary rather than a business(wo)man, as someone driven by a "touch of madness" (The Economist 2006) whose

behaviors are not explainable through rational (i.e. utility maximizing) economic motivations.[11] In fact, a willingness to take risks and try novel things is the reason why innovations come from small startups or individuals rather than from established firms, since the latter take a more risk-averse perspective (Baumol 2006). In an attempt to mimic this method of success while still reducing risks, firms employ research and development teams; and it is the existence of these teams which make innovation predicable on the macro-economic scale and allow it to be analyzed numerically. In fact, argues Baumol, once the business is well established, the entrepreneur ceases to exist as such and instead transforms himself into (or is replaced by) the position of manager (Baumol 2006:3).

In contrast to a view of entrepreneurship as requiring a unique personality or skill set, Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and founder of Grameen Bank, stresses that "all human beings are born as entrepreneurs [...] but unfortunately many of us never had that opportunity to unwrap that part of our life" (Mosher 2011). Yunus cites financial resources and opportunity, not innate ingenuity, as being the key ingredients for successful entrepreneurship. He compares the poor to bonsai trees: healthy seeds who were denied sufficient nutrients and space to grow into their full potential. The idea behind micro-loans as envisioned by Yunus and other lenders is to provide that little nudge which can be the first step in climbing out of poverty.

[11] The image of a creative madness separated from monetary concerns is reminiscent images of the professional artist as driven by creativity and indifferent to wealth (or, in the case of the artist, lack thereof); in both cases there is a moral de-valuing of profit as a motivating force. During my participation in and observation of on-line art communities in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the relative values of artistic freedom and financial success were a frequent topic of discussions. Some of the most well known and successful artists in these communities were those who combined artistic and business ability and they sought to disabuse novices of ideas of "pure" art and direct them toward seeing their work as the product of skilled labor and valued time, as well as highlighting the importance of marketing, publicity, and balancing "fun" creative works with pieces which will earn money. This attitude contrasted sharply with that found in an amateur art community in which artwork is seen as an expression of personal creativity, technical skill was downplayed, and potential marketability was not discussed. Readers interested in the economic and entrepreneurial side of artwork are directed to Plattner's (1996) ethnography or Million's (2006) collection of articles for and by freelance artists.

The micro-lending organization Kiva adopts a similar view, citing the purpose behind microfinance as " the idea that low-income individuals are capable of lifting themselves out of poverty if given access to financial services" (Kiva 2011).

The entrepreneur as described by Lowrey is an unpredictable profit-making force to be tamed by the large business, while that described by Yunus is an ordinary person taking advantage of opportunities, but there is another common perspective on entrepreneurship which focuses on persistence rather than creativity and expansion rather than innovation.

In March 2011, the Kauffman Foundation, a private organization dedicated to "advancing entrepreneurship and improving the education of children and youth" released their yearly statistical report and announced that the rate of new startups in the USA is at a fifteen year high. They also noted record increases in the rate of creation of new Latino-owned and immigrant-owned businesses between 2009 and 2010.[12] But these numbers were a mixed blessing: many of these businesses fell into the category of "jobless entrepreneurship," i.e. self-run enterprises that do not employ other people. (Fairlie 2011) The fact that Kauffman and other news sources who reported their findings (see e.g. Ribitzky 2011) bemoaned this large quantity of new entrepreneurs for failing to create new jobs at a time when jobs are badly needed is evidence of the moral valence placed on entrepreneurship in the United States. It seems paradoxical that an increase in self-employment (rather than unemployment) would be seen as detrimental to the employment situation of the country as a whole, but by limiting themselves to a one (wo)man

[12] The 2011 Kaufman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity lists 0.34% of American adults creating a new business every month for both 2009 and 2010, the highest level since the beginning of the study in 1996. Latino-owned business creation increased from 0.46% in 2009 to 0.56% in 2010, this was the largest increase by racial category. The largest increase by age range occurred among 35-44 year olds, (from 0.35 in 2008 to 0.40 in 2009). Creation of immigrant-owned business rose from 0.51% in 2009 to 0.62% in 2010, while there was a slight decline in entrepreneurship for native-born Americans. The full 2011 report is available from the Kauffman Group's website at www.kauffman.org.

business these small enterprises go against the ideology of entrepreneurial growth. In contrast to such a negative view, I would argue that "jobless" enterprises are supporting their owners' families as well as mitigating risk on the household level in an environment of economic uncertainty. As several of the mothers in my study would say, there is safety in being one's own boss.

The US media focus on job creation as a criteria for success, as well as the phrase "*jobless* entrepreneur" itself (which links the concept of small entrepreneurship to the already emotionally salient idea of unemployment) both illustrate the common perception that entrepreneurship is only truly "entrepreneurial" if it is growing in size and profits.

Kaufman and others who criticize jobless entrepreneurs are not highlighting the innovative aspect of small businesses but rather their moral purpose within the national economy: namely to expand and create jobs. This expanding entrepreneur, who has the knowledge and persistence to take a small loan or capital investment and grow it into a thriving business, is also the target client of micro-finance organizations (as will be discussed later in this section).

In some cases the entrepreneur's success is credited to her having special abilities which are either innate or acquired. Lowrey claims that "entrepreneurs possess special perseverance, ingenuities, abilities and skills [...] But making persistent effort to achieve goals or to get things done requires extraordinary work ethic" (Lowrey 2006:4). Sapovadia, director of the National Insurance Academy in Pune agrees that "Most people do not have the skills, vision, creativity and persistence to be true entrepreneurs [...] most clients of micro credit are not micro entrepreneurs by choice. One should not romanticize the idea of 'poor as entrepreneurs'." He

suggests such skills are acquired rather than innate and outlines a program of "capacity building" to aid individuals in becoming entrepreneurs (Sapovadia, no year).

In all the definitions above, the focus is on the entrepreneurs' financial success, whether it be motivated by poverty or creative vision, and on his/her ability to start small and, through ingenuity or perseverance, grow a profitable business. This shared focus is evident across different domains and different fields, from Baumol's macroeconomic models to Yunus' charitable lending programs. It is also evident in two very different organizations who both focus their attentions on a target audience composed of women with entrepreneurial leanings and little capital: Kiva.org, an international collection of microfinance lending organizations; and Avon, one of several "direct selling" businesses popular in Latin America who work off the principle of recruiting independent "consultants" to sell merchandise on commission to friends and neighbors.

I will briefly outline the assumptions and strategies displayed by these two organizations, and then explain why this image does not match the entrepreneurial mothers in my study and other self-employed individuals highlighted in the economic anthropological literature who have different criteria for success and different paths for achieving it.

Kiva is an internet-based international organization connecting small-scale individual lenders with local microfinance institutions around the globe. Loan requests are published in a searchable database online along with personal information about each borrower and his/her project. Anyone with a credit card can sign up to be a lender and choose which borrower(s) she wishes to support to and how much she wish to invest (from $25 up to the full value of the requested loan). Kiva passes the money on to local organizations that handle the actual loans. When a borrower repays the loan, the investor's money is credited to her account to be

redistributed to another borrower. Loans on Kiva are overwhelmingly business directed; out of the fifteen loan categories on the webpage, only one (the "Personal Use" category) covers expenses not related to running a business.[13] At the time of accessing their database in May 2011, approximately 2% of Kiva's currently requested loans were classified as personal use.[14] Two thirds of personal use requests were for the purpose of buying a vehicle, often with the added justification that the vehicle would be used for a family member to drive to and from work. So even these non-business loans can be classified as an investment in the borrower's future financial welfare rather than personal comforts.[15] The classification scheme, and the distribution of loans within it, highlights Kiva's emphasis on micro-loans as a tool for aiding small businesses rather than for family comforts and quality of life, an emphasis which is mirrored in Sapovadia's outline of what makes a good or bad entrepreneur.

Direct Selling Businesses sell merchandise exclusively by catalog, making use of independent vendors (often called "consultants" or "affiliates") who are not directly employed by the company but instead earning commission, discounts, and sometimes free merchandise based on the level of their sales (for more information, see their webpage at directselling411.com). Internationally recognized examples of such organizations include Avon, Mary Kay, and Tupperware, all of whom have a strong presence in Mexico as well as in the USA.

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[13] Categories with active loan requests were: Agriculture, Arts, Clothing (clothing and shoe sales), Construction, Food, Housing, Manufacturing, Personal Use, Retail, Services, Transportation, Wholesale. There were no requests listed in Education, Entertainment or Health.

[14] The personal use category comprised 0.73% of all loans requested since 2005 (and approximately the same percentage of loans fulfilled). Statistics are taken from kiva.org on May 9, 2011. 1,213 loan requests were classified into 15 different categories, three of which were empty on this date. 31 (or 2.5%) were categorized as "Personal Use."

[15] Individual loans consisted of: 18 requests for a vehicle, 6 for personal purchases and 1 for home energy; group loans consisted of 3 requests for home appliances (with 8-14 members per request) and one each for wedding expenses (9 members) consumer goods (3 members) and one additional vehicle loan (9 members).

As mentioned previously in this chapter, entrepreneurial mothers in San Cristobal use direct selling as one of their multiple income sources. Like microfinance lenders, direct selling businesses perceive and describe a good businesswoman as being creative and self-motivated, as well as capable of building a thriving (and profitable) business from a small start. This presupposition is evident in the promotional literature encouraging potential vendors to join the company. Avon Cosmetics offers low start-up costs at "little more than the price of a lipstick" and "incredible earning potential" to the English-speaking women who choose to sign up to sell their catalog-order cosmetics (Avon Cosmetics Inc. 2011), while Mexican women are asked to consider whether they are "innovative, creative, dynamic, pro-active and welcoming of change"[16] (Avon Mexico). To encourage vendors to intensify sales, direct selling companies offer enticing prizes to those who meet specific goals. These include higher percentage commissions, free jewelry and house-wares, or vacation packages and invitations to special international conferences held in popular tourist destinations. Mary Kay Cosmetics, a company founded to create opportunities for women vendors, claims to have "one of the most generous rewards and recognition programs in the direct selling industry." Prizes awarded to high-selling Mary Kay vendors include Career Cars, trips to exotic international locations, a state-of-the-art television or diamond jewelry. (Mary Kay Inc. 2011) [17]

In contrast to the non-profit microfinance organizations, direct selling companies earn profits relative to the success of their vendors and therefore have vested interest in encouraging expansion and brand loyalty. While some San Cristobal vendors do focus their business acumen

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[16] *¿Eres innovador, creativo, dinámico, proactivo y "abrazas" el cambio?*

[17] While the actual sales numbers required to obtain these prizes may vary from one company to another, this list is fairly consistent with ones appearing in the promotional and training literature sent to the San Cristobal vendors who kindly explained to me the inner workings of their direct selling businesses.

on achieving rewards from the parent company through creating large networks of clients, others prefer to diversify their efforts. Rather than creating a larger clientele based around a single brand, these women prefer to sell multiple brands to the same network, and will often pass stacks of assorted catalogs around to family and friends. They are aware that by diversifying their products instead of their customers they will be unable to take advantage of the money-making incentives offered by each brand. Having a broad portfolio of catalogs, however, can increase customer loyalty: potential buyers will be more likely to find something they like among the more diverse inventory. If one follows the definition of (expanding and innovative) entrepreneurship I have described above, spreading out one's resources in this fashion would be seen as inefficient, unwise and disinterested – going against the image of the entrepreneur as driven, persistent and focused on her business. In the cross-cultural literature in anthropology and development, however, such *diversification strategies* are not only quite common, they are also advantageous in many situations. For instance, it has been noted above how the resources gained by running a home store and selling from a catalog can be combined to reduce profit loss. But before examining the general advantages of a diversified household income and what it means to be a diversified entrepreneur, it is necessary to return to the micro-retail business that forms one of those income sources. The following section examines why the entrepreneurial mothers in this study - as well as other small-business women - chose a home store as one of their income generating activities.

V. SETTING UP SHOP

The economic careers of the San Cristobal women in this study share the theme of entrepreneurship based on taking advantage of unplanned opportunity: family networks which provided access to sellable merchandise; a lack of mobility (because of small children or

domestic duties) which inspired the idea of an at-home business; and the physical space and location of the house itself which provided a storefront from which to sell that did not require rent payments or other large capital. This form of opportunistic planning, while at odds with the model of the businesswoman described above, enables the implementation of diversification strategies which, in various contexts around the world, serve as a successful adaptation to environments of economic uncertainty and scarce resources (Barrett et al 2001).

Sapovadia (and perhaps other microfinance experts) would characterize this lack of planning and disinterest in business expansion as a sign of ineptness. But ineptness is a strange description to use for intelligent and resourceful women who have no qualms about seeking out training, information or resources when they see it as useful to their own work and lives. The contradiction only makes sense when we expand our focus away from the single activity (running a store) to encompass the household as a whole. Far from being a budding career, home shops are only one part of a non-centralized overall strategy that provides a safety net in an environment of uncertain job opportunities. Mothers' explanations of their stores reflect this non-centralized focus. Reasons for opening the business include "having a few things to sell" and "being bored at home with the kids."[18] Studies of small entrepreneurship cross-culturally yield similarly diverse explanations. A survey of female run home businesses in Mérida, Yucatan reveals macro-level correlations between the economic crisis of the mid-1990s and the influx of micro-retail businesses, but over half of the women entrepreneurs surveyed said they had chosen to start a business primarily for personal, rather than financial, reasons: either to improve their standard of living (36.7%) or for personal fulfillment (16%). One fifth (20.7%) cited "helping

[18] Rees (2006) cites a similar story: Upon doing financial calculations in 1999 and discovering that raising pigs domestically cost more than their value on the market, one of her study participants was surprised at the numbers. This same woman – who also ran her husband's store and cared for several small children – then added "What else can I do with my time?" as an explanation (p 95).

my husband" (i.e. by providing money for daily household expenses) as a primary reason and an equal number cited lack of other sources of income (e.g. because of divorce, separation, or a husband's illness or unemployment) (Valdez 2003:256).

In a research survey of entrepreneurship around the globe, two thirds of those surveyed became entrepreneurs voluntarily, attracted to business opportunities, while one third turned to entrepreneurship because they could not find other suitable work. In developing countries the latter group accounted for half of those surveyed (Ligthelm 2005).

In contrast, a study of *spaza* shops – South-African informal home-based convenience stores operated out of the owner's home – revealed that only one fourth of owners had become entrepreneurs voluntarily through starting their own business (6%) or joining an existing business (17%) (Ligthelm 2005). However, 41% answered that they would not switch to formal employment if they were given the opportunity. Ligthelm suggests that these owners perceive their business as a long-term career, and indeed many of the *spazas* surveyed (39.7%) have been in operation for at least five years. These long-term home-based enterprises (often referred to as HBEs in the research literature) contrast with those in my study, which have been known to expand, contract, or close and re-open at need.

In addition to the store, the San Cristobal mothers in the current study had multiple other economic activities and plans: Doña Elena made embroidered pillow cases which she sold during the holidays, a task which she described as a way to keep herself occupied while watching her children rather than as a money-making endeavor. Doña Angela and Doña Francisca both ran various sorts of *tandas* - rotating credit groups that paid in cash or merchandise. Doña Lola and her husband imported shrimp from the coast, which she dried and resold. Doña Rosa trained herself by taking classes in hair styling, and was known by family and neighbors as the person to

go to for anything from trims to perms to formal wedding up-dos. Approximately a year after the "typical day" described at the beginning of this chapter, Doña Francisca borrowed money from her son and advice from her son-in-law and bought two second-hand computers to open her own *ciber* (a pay-by-the-hour internet cafe common in San Cristobal used by students for homework, children for games, and people of all ages for checking email and chatting via MSN). When I asked her about the business a year later, she admitted that it was barely breaking even, but was satisfied with its progress: the income paid for the electricity used by the machines and her college-age daughters were able to work late at night, well after the closing hours of the *ciber* down the street and without paying for the computers. Everyone still paid for their own printing, she said, because that money was set aside for buying ink cartridges. Her overall verdict was that even though she wasn't profiting, the business cost her nothing to run and it was convenient for the girls.[19]

VI. CHILD WORK, CHILD CONSUMPTION

While exploitation of children's labor is a serious topic in Western legislation, research shows that many small home businesses do not in fact depend on the work of children. Instead, the child's role in the household typically involves carrying out low-skill domestic chores in order to free up the more economically valuable skilled labor of adult family members (Nieuwenhuys 1996:233,245). Children are also kept out of the family business in the hopes that by continuing their education they can achieve better, more respectable jobs as adults (Tipple 2005, Brandtstädter 2004, Pomponio 1993). The strategic distribution of labor among economic,

[19] Note that this calculation does not include the many hours she and her daughter put into tending the business. Most of the mothers interviewed did not consider their own or their family members' labor as part of the cost of business, perhaps because this time was often used for other simultaneous activities such as cooking, socializing with neighbors or, in the case of the *ciber*, chatting online with distant relatives and friends.

domestic, and education related tasks is another reason why examinations of economic diversification need to include all necessary household activities, not just those yielding an actual income. I classify both education and childcare as being responsibilities which parents and children must balance in managing economic strategies.

In those cases in the research literature where children do earn an income, it often is for pocket money or goes towards children's own expenses, such as new clothes or school supplies (Nieuwenhuys 1996) rather than becoming part of the general household pool. Children's income also becomes an incentive and means of training them into economic skills which will support them later in life, as for instance in the case of Asante market vendors who give daughters small amounts of money or goods which the latter can sell and haggle in the same fashion as their mothers (Clark 1994). Here, child labor is used for the purpose of apprenticeship rather than commercial gain (Nieuwenhuys 1996).

Cultural attitudes regarding appropriate child activities must also be taken into account (Ochs & Schieffelin 1984). In an interview, Doña Elena (whose oldest child was three years old) told me that she planned to look for work outside the home when her children were older, leaving them in the care of their grandmother. In this situation, it would be good for them to be able to watch the store while she was gone. But she made a distinction between tending a store at home and sending children off to work outside the home, which she considered to be unacceptable:

> "Pero es parte de la familia también que ellos ayuden. [...] Ya sería malo que yo le mandara a vender chicles en el parque o así yo estando buena pa' trabajar. Así sí. Pero así en la casa ellos también tienen que ayudar."
>
> *"But that's part of the family too, that they help out [...] It'd be bad if I sent them off to sell gum in the park or something like that with me being able to work. That's for sure. But here in the house they have to help out too."*
> (Doña Elena, 2008)[20]

Doña Elena's comparison of "selling gum in the park" refers to the small, unaccompanied children seen selling candies or artisan jewelry or simply begging for pennies in the tourist areas of San Cristobal. Her implication is that one should not send a young child out to work if one is capable of doing the work oneself. The image if the pitiful child selling on the street is a familiar one; in another interview, Doña Angela's son Alex teases his brother Raul for refusing to do his homework, and comments that if Raul does not do well in school he will end up selling gum in the street and crying. [21]

As will be further discussed in Chapter 4, the children of these entrepreneurial mothers were not expected to tend the store on a regular basis, although they were sporadically asked to lend a hand with store or household chores. Nor were they recruited as laborers in other economic activities in which their parents engaged. Parents were more concerned that children help out with house cleaning (specifically putting away their own toys), do their homework and, in the case of the oldest, keep younger siblings out of trouble. Despite their lack of assigned economic responsibilities, the children of these entrepreneurial mothers interact with their parents' work in a variety of different fashions, including intently observing adult activities, voluntarily making attempts to join in, or occasionally being asked to "help out" on a case-by-

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[20] This quote, and her son's reaction to it, are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

[21] For an examination of children in this line of work in Brazil, see research by Geoffrey Saxe, in particular Saxe 1988 on the development of mathematical skills through economic transactions.

case basis. Children's observation of adult work and behaviors is a key component of their socialization into understandings of both the moral and economic aspects of work and jobs (Paugh 2005, Fasulo et al 2007; Paradise and Rogoff 2009; and see also Capps & Ochs 1995 for socialization of children into replicating adult world views). This child participation is discussed in Chapter 4 and the longitudinal implications of such participation are briefly touched upon in the concluding chapter.

VII. DEFINING DIVERSIFICATION

Diversification is the term used for the managing of multiple income sources by an individual or household. The activities in question may take place in both the formal and the informal economy, may be paid for in cash or by reciprocal trade, and may or may not be considered "jobs" by those involved (see e.g. Wilson (1995) on Mexicali wives brickyard labor being classified as an extension of their domestic duties rather than a job). Participants in such activities may also be using a different categorization scheme. Rees (2006), for instance, examined how the Zapotec distinction between two forms of labor was mapped onto Spanish terminology. Among Spanish-speaking Zapotec families in Oaxaca, reciprocal labor was locally termed *ayuda* (literally "help"), while the word *trabajo* (literally "work") was reserved for wage labor. While both forms are valued in the Zapotec community, the connotations of the two Spanish terms (similar to the connotations of their English translations) has lead non-Zapotec outsiders to assume that, because only men are described as "working," women's labor is not valued in the community. (Since women do not hire themselves out as wage-laborers, they may have been telling researchers, quite honestly, that they never "work," they only "help," without necessarily devaluing their own contributions.)

Income diversification at the household (and even individual) level is a common strategy around the world (e.g. Ellis 1998 on Sub-Saharan Africa, Preston 1989 on Java, Halperin 1990 on rural Kentucky[22], and Rees 2006 on rural Mexico) appearing in both rural and urban environments (Ersado 2003, Barrett et al 2001). Contrary to popular belief [cite], household diversification is not exclusively among poor or under-employed families. In Zimbabwe, diversification strategies are most common among the urban poor and the rural rich (Ersado 2003), while across rural sub-Saharan Africa it is the more wealthy and better educated who have the resources to engage in more diversified investments (Barrett et al 2001).

The terminology for this phenomenon of engaging in multiple simultaneous economic activities varies slightly depending on the focus of the individual researcher. In this study, I use *diversification* or *diversification strategy* to refer to the ways mothers maintain the household through balancing multiple ongoing concerns, among which I include both activities that yield immediate income as well as those which can be categorized as long-term investments (e.g. children's education or adults' job training) or as domestic reproduction (e.g. cooking, grocery shopping, and housework). All three categories are necessary to the household, and one cited advantage of balancing multiple small-scale economic activities is the ability to flexibly shift time to accommodate the needs of children and household.

Halperin (1990) uses the phrase *multiple livelihood strategies* to describe Appalachian families' integration of capitalist and non-capitalist economic activities, of "people performing many kinds of work tasks in a given day, week, season and lifetime" (Halperin 1990:19). Such work includes subsistence farming and gardening, short-term wage labor, and service labor; it

[22] Halperin also notes that the livelihood strategies observed in her study have strong parallels to those found in rural Caribbean and Mexican villages: "the Kentucky way is generalizable, if not universal; it has many manifestations and variations all over the rural landscape" (p 2).

may be wage-based, cash-generating or subsistence. Her analysis distinguishes three economies: agrarian, marketplace, and wage labor. The first two combine subsistence production with selling for cash, while the third encompasses formal sector service jobs which nonetheless lack any expectation of long-term job security. In this environment, families create livelihood security through having the flexibility and know-how to switch easily from one type of work to another when need arises or to combine them in different ways. Self-reliance – gained through having a wide range of skills – and reciprocal reliance upon the skills and resources of kin networks are the best safety net, an economic scenario similar to that in which San Cristobal mothers make their livelihoods. In interviews, older Appalachians looked critically upon younger kin who were living in the city and supporting themselves with full-time employment. In their experience, such jobs were never guaranteed, and this younger generation lacked any knowledge of farming or other self-sustaining skills they could fall back on if their employment were to disappear (Halperin 1990:12).

In a review of the literature, Ellis (1998) distinguishes between *income diversification* and *livelihood diversification,* with the former referring to cash inflow and in-kind payments with market value (e.g. food) while the latter encompasses the social institutions that constrain or permit household diversification (e.g. local gender norms, unequal access to land, or kin networks). As I will argue in Chapter 5, resources obtainable through kin and neighbor networks play a large role in San Cristobal mothers' decisions to engage in certain economic activities. I further add that the notion of livelihood (rather than income) diversification can also include other high-priority activities into which economic resources are poured, even if they do not result in immediate cash gains – for instance children's (and in some cases adults') schooling.

The idea of education as a valuable long-term economic investment is also a cross-cultural trend. Among Mandok villagers in New Guinea a good education would enable a child to get a job in town and send money back to the village (Pomponio 1993). For parents in a Chinese shrimp farming community (Brandtstädter 2004) the shrimp business was viewed as a temporary money-maker and not a long-term career. It was "money plucked from the sky," which did not require formal training or an apprenticeship. Rather than reinvest profits into such a business, parents saved money for children's university education which would provide respect and a good job. In both cases, an investment in children's education is also a long-term investment for the family since adult children with good jobs are better able to support their relatives.

Ellis (1998) also problematizes the word *diversification* itself, distinguishing between *(income) diversity*, referring to the composition of household incomes, and (*income) diversification*, referring to "an active social process whereby households are observed to engage in increasingly intricate portfolios of activities over time." He notes, however, that the lack of longitudinal research makes it difficult to determine whether a given group of households are in fact becoming more diverse, since most studies of diversification focus on the multiple streams of income present at any one point, rather than the process whereby this pattern emerges within a given household. For this reason, I argue that studies of children's participation and observation of economic diversification strategies, and the longitudinal effects of child socialization, would fill a gap in the existing anthropological literature.

VIII. INFORMAL ECONOMY

Halperin's examination of multiple livelihood strategies highlights the integration of formal and informal economic domains. Informal work is used as a supplement or replacement for full-time employment, but part of the definition presupposes that informal workers have been excluded from employment in the formal economy (Mezzera 1989) and therefore informal enterprises are based off of a surplus labor force which lacks access to resources of production (e.g. capital or raw materials). These assumptions imply that laborers would be "better off" as it were, in the formal sector but do not have what it takes to get a job there. However it is uncertain how one defines exclusion in this definition. Are women who choose home employment (or domestic responsibilities) over full-time formal employment "excluded" or are they staying out of the formal economy by choice?[23] Lee & Orr (2001) contradict previous studies' assumptions about home labor as marginal work carried out by individuals who do not have the option of working outside the home. In their study of crab-pickers, home self-employment was tied with a sense of community belonging and of personal pride in one's own family product.

Using the same definition, Tipple (2005) examines the degree to which home-based enterprises fit the general criteria for informal labor. His comparison of households across four countries reveals no difference in the level of male employment among HBE households and

[23] And how does one define "choice"? The media buzz about the growing phenomenon of *off-ramping* (working women opting-out of their careers in favor of full-time motherhood) at the beginning of the 21st century framed the decision as a satisfying personal choice while failing to highlight the institutional context (e.g. lack of access to childcare, inadequate maternal leave, lack of domestic help and so on) which make stay-at-home motherhood so much more appealing and the "choice" of re-entering the workforce an unacceptable one (Talbot 2010:202).

HBE-lacking[24] ones, but does show an increase in female employment. This indicates that while men's engagement in HBEs is not due to lack of other employment opportunities, such businesses may be providing employment to women who would otherwise not be part of the workforce.

IX. DIVERSIFICATION AS AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY

On the societal level, diversification as a social phenomenon can be driven by multiple factors. Christopher Barrett and colleagues (2001) distinguish between "push factors" and "pull factors", a categorization which appears implicitly throughout the literature, albeit not under those terms.

"Push factors" consist of responses to local economic need, whether due to an external crisis (such as a drought), loss of employment, or increase in family expenses – any situation in which the current income stream is no longer sufficient or becomes too erratic to meet consumption needs. Families spread their efforts across multiple income streams as a way of reducing the effects of risk or fluctuation from any single source. Income diversification can smooth out such income fluctuations to better meet constant expenses (Barrett et al 2001).

"Pull factors" consist of responses to local opportunities, especially through taking advantage of complementarity between two or more income streams – combinations in which two economic enterprises become more profitable in tandem than they would be if carried out independently (Barrett et al 2001). For two San Cristobal entrepreneurial mothers, their husband's employment as a wholesale goods distributor proved to be a pull factor for setting up their own stores: in each case, the wife had access to discount merchandise that she could resell.

[24] Tipple refers to these as "non-HBE households," with a caveat that the term is misleading since it could also refer to households which have non-HBE businesses, i.e. ones not located in the home. To avoid confusion, I call them "HBE-lacking households" instead.

Educational expenses are another push factor for many families. The yearly back-to-school shopping lists can be such a drain on a household that local banks and department stores will advertise special loans and payment plans specifically to allow families to meet the expenses of children's school supplies and uniforms. College expenses are even more of a burden. In an interview, one mother recounts how two of her children's acceptances into prestigious out-of-town universities prompted her to look for extra sources of income. (Names and professions are omitted for privacy).

> They were there since they began their training in, in [areas of study], um, they decided to go and study there and me, I was one of the people who told them "Yes, yes go, kids" without thinking of the expenses. I did think about it but neither did I want to tell them "No, don't go because we won't be able [to afford it]." I've always said "If one works, one can." So I said "Well, I've always said that and now, what do I do?"
>
> *Ellos se fueron desde que inició la carrera de, de [su especialidad] [mi hijo mayor] y [el hijo menor] de [su especialidad], este, decidieron irse a estudiar allá y yo, fui una de las personas que les dije "Sí, sí vete hijos" sin pensar de los gastos. Sí lo pensaba, pero tampoco quería decirles "No, no vayan porque no vamos a poder." Yo siempre (he) dicho "Si se trabaja se puede." Entonces dije, "Bueno yo siempre he dicho eso y ahora ¿qué hago?"* (September 2009)

Cutting across the two broad categories of local need and local opportunity are a number of different motivations for diversifying. Most of the motives listed below are drawn from Barrett et al. While they were applied originally to their study of rural families, this list is also valid for urban contexts, and I provide examples from my own fieldwork to illustrate:

1) Desire for diversity in consumption: One reason for engaging in a side enterprise is to procure or produce locally unavailable items primarily for one's own use, and only secondarily for commercial profit (Barrett et al 2001). Consumption was sometimes an impetus for catalog vending: direct sales merchandise is not available in stores but must be bought through registered affiliate vendors who often receive discounts or promotions on the products they sell. In my

observations of recruitment meetings for a cosmetics company, personal consumption was presented as a strong selling point for recruiting new vendors; rather than buying from one's neighbor, a participant can sign up to be a vendor herself and receive wholesale discounts on items she buys for her own family. Presumably the parent company's reason for offering such incentives was the expectation that self-vendors would eventually begin selling to friends and family as well.

2) Working in a context of *economies of scope* rather than *economies of scale*: In an *economy of scale*, one's income is directly connected to the amount of labor or capital investment; hourly wage employment being one example of this. In an *economy of scope,* the amount of profit one can gain from a single enterprise is limited; subsequent increases in labor do not yield a proportional increase in profits. In such a situation, spreading the one's efforts across several smaller projects will be a better investment than trying to intensify a project which yields diminishing returns. (Barrett et al 2001).

The San Cristobal home stores in this study received relatively few customers, and the customers who did arrive tended to buy small amounts of inexpensive snacks, rather than groceries. In such a context, increasing one's stock of merchandise or extending store hours would probably not result in significantly more revenue. On the other hand, because tending the store requires relatively little active labor, one can use the same block of time to achieve other tasks such as craftwork, cooking or child-care. Here it is important to note once again that not all of the tasks which entrepreneurial mothers are balancing are financial investments. Childcare, housework, cooking, temporary caregiving of relatives (e.g. due to illness or work situations) and maintenance of social and family ties are all necessary uses of time and resources. Such activities are also considered to be important and taken into account in time management strategizing. In a

retrospective interview, one mother talked about giving up a potential job opportunity because it would not allow her to spend time with her two young daughters.

3) "Incomplete markets": If a given resource cannot be used effectively, it might be better to invest some small amount of labor rather than letting it go entirely to waste (Barrett et al 2001). For instance, a San Cristobal mother with small children has surplus time but she cannot invest it in a high-paying job because her free hours are irregular and she must spend them at home with the children As an alternative, she might spend some of her time on a low-paying task which at least contributes something.

While aiding in diversification in some cases, missing markets can also discourage diversification if the cost of even partial investment is too high. In Preston's (1989) study of Javanese farmers, many individuals did not make use of inherited farmland because it was too far from home to be worth the effort, especially since the time could be spent on more profitable commercial activities and or other farm properties which are more conveniently located (Preston 1989).

4) Self insurance: Engaging in multiple activities helps reduce and buffer economic fluctuations. This factor becomes more important when other sources of insurance (e.g. government unemployment benefits, job security) are perceived as scarce or inadequate (Barrett et al 2001). Perceived job security was low for the families surveyed; tales of unscrupulous employers who required extra hours without proportional pay, delayed paychecks, fined or fired employees for imagined infractions were common stories. Even college educated young adults had no guarantee that their degree[25] would lead to a long-term position, and bouncing from one

[25] In Mexico, a four-year college degree, or *licenciatura* certifies the individual as trained in a field and capable of practicing on a professional level (e.g. as a lawyer or psychologist). In terms of job qualifications, it should be seen as closer to a USA Master's degree rather than a Bachelor's.

temporary or part-time job to another, or taking on unskilled work entirely unrelated to one's specialty, were not seen as surprising. The benefits of self-insurance are most obvious when the various enterprises are unrelated to each other and a crisis in one domain would not affect one's income in the other; for instance selling catalog merchandise in addition to have a wage job. But diversification into related domains can also mitigate risk if the resources expended in one unsuccessful enterprise can be reused elsewhere. As mentioned briefly earlier in this chapter, several store-owners also sell (or have relatives who sell) catalog merchandise. Store-owners sometimes choose to increase their profits by buying limited availability items from the catalog and displaying in the store at a higher price. However if a customer is not able to pay for the item once it arrives or changes her mind, the home store can serve as an alternate route for disposing of the unwanted item and recouping the vendor's money. This repurposing of resources is also an advantage in economies of scope, allowing losses in one enterprise to be at least partially recouped through another.

Zygmut Bauman (2001) frames society as a tradeoff between freedom and security, with excess of one leading to the desire for the other: excess of security yields a lack of choice and opportunity for self-fulfillment; excess off freedom yields a lack of direction and sense of one's position within the larger society. In an interview about her family, Doña Norma, a woman who ran a small store out of her home, expressed concern over her husband's employment situation: while he perceived a steady paycheck as being desirable, she saw his employment as depending on the whims of his boss, and felt that her own work was a more dependable income source because her success was based entirely on her own efforts.

In a similar light, Giddens (1990) describes one of the key features of modernity as the implementation of trust into "abstract systems" (e.g. banks, universities, the government) who

provide authority and reliability to what would otherwise be unsafe interactions with unknown strangers (i.e. the employees of these institutions). However, the system is not foolproof: negative experiences with unreliable representatives (which Giddens terms "access points") can create mistrust toward the larger institution or system as a whole. (Giddens 1990).

Diversification and engaging in self-directed economic activities provide safety in a context in which security is scarce and larger institutions (employers, job security, and government unemployment benefits) are perceived as untrustworthy and unpredictable.

5) Transfer of resources within and between households: Rees (2006) hypothesizes that some economic activities can serve as a way of transferring wealth or storing wealth. Small livestock raising in rural Oaxacan families is not a financially profitable enterprise, as the revenue from selling an adult pig is less than the cost of the feed purchased over its lifetime. Rees argues that a main benefit of small livestock is the transfer of wealth from the husband's business to the wife's pockets: he buys the feed for the pig which she tends, raises, and later sells while she keeps the money for her own household expenses. Among San Cristobal families in my own research, it is labor which is often transferred rather than cash. Adults keep careful accounting of individual ownership of property and income, but household members will often help out with a large project for a family member's business venture, for instance helping to package or label merchandise or pitching in with the piecework for a large commission or an impending deadline. In such cases, the helpers neither ask nor are offered reimbursement for their time, and both the credit and the responsibility for the finished product go to the main party. Just like asking children to keep an eye on the store, pitching in with a large project is a form of family help that is not calculated into the economic equation. As Doña Elena noted, "es parte de la familia" (*it's part of [being] family*). The distinction between labor, which is shared, and

financial costs, which are individually accounted for, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

X. WOMEN AND MONEY

Women's home employment has been examined in a variety of contexts. It has been presupposed that women who work part-time or from home do so because they lack opportunities for better work (Mezzera 1989), or are constrained by cultural and institutional expectations that shoulder them with the bulk of childcare responsibilities (Lees & Orr 2001). As noted above, however, these are not always the reasons cited by individuals who choose home-based entrepreneurship rather than paid employment (Valdéz 2003, Lees & Orr 2001).

Underlying gender ideologies and differing expectations of male and female responsibilities do affect decision-making related to economics and family care. In Latin America, the concept of *machismo* influences both men's and women's ideologies of what it means to be a good spouse. Unlike in the United States, where the term has become stigmatized and associated with negative Hispanic male stereotypes and a crude, almost violent masculinity, in Latin America the term *macho* connotes male family responsibility as well as male power: the idea that a man should be both a protector and a provider to his family. In a series of interviews by Mirandé (1998), Latino immigrant men in the United States listed positive values associated with machismo, including honor, responsibility, being of high moral character, and caring for one's family. Interviews with young Chicano gang members also highlighted the importance of getting a job and "being the man of the family," i.e. taking on an absent father's role for one's younger siblings and the role of economic provider for one's mother (Portillos et al 1996).

In contrast to the ideology of the strong and reliable *macho* father figure, is the image of the *mantenido* (from *mantener*, to support - literally one who is economically supported): a man

who cannot or will not care for his family and must be supported by his working wife. Being perceived as *mantenido*, even through involuntary unemployment, brings shame not only to the husband but also to his wife who cannot be a proper mother because she must take on the male breadwinner role in his stead. Wilson's (1995) study of Mexicali brick-makers serves as an example of how this ideology is supported by both spouses. Brick-makers wives make themselves "invisible": to the researchers, to their husbands, and even to themselves. They downplay their contributions to the family business as simply "helping out," emphasizing secondary activities such as feeding the laborers or loading finished bricks. In some cases they even claim that they have never done any brickmaking, even though observations of their daily routines shows that they do participate directly in aspects of the production process. Although secondary contributions such as food preparation are important, by downplaying them, women achieve status as wives who are supported by a responsible spouse, while men achieve status as providers for the family. Framing one's identity in terms of traditional gender roles can also be a strategic defense for those who are forced to break their roles, as seen in Judith Marti's (2001) examination of 19th century Mexican woman vendors' letters of petition for government tax exemptions. These self-employed women highlight their vulnerability as mothers and their status as helpless widows forced to fend for themselves without the protection or support of a husband in order to elicit government officials' sympathy and sense of responsibility.

As economic conditions make these ideologies untenable, they are gradually being adapted by younger generations, with young men redefining male roles to take into account the necessity of dual-income families (Gutmann 1996 cited in Wolseth & Babb 2008). A case study of a different form of gender redefinition is the appropriation of positive *macho* values by young immigrant women as an alternative to the feminine models of their mothers' generation.

Adolescent Latina high-school students, define a *macha* woman[26] as one who is self-assertive, can take care of herself, and demands respect and equality from others, including her future husband, in all domains of life (Mendoza-Denton 2009:164). By becoming *macha*, these young women are able to maintain a feminine heterosexual identity while disconnecting from a traditional gender role which they perceive as submissive and powerless. This *macha* discourse focuses on assertiveness and equality but says little about the responsibilities of providing and caring for family, which are also part of the *macho* role. This lapse may be due in part to the fact that such features are already part of gendered expectations for women.

The *macha* ideology is not the only impetus to changing gender roles. The literature on gendered division of labor among Latin American households shows that the traditional mode of division of labor, with husband as provider and wife as homemaker, is still present (Arriagada 2007, Cerrutti & Binstock 2009), in 2007 only one out of five families actually conformed to this ideal (Arriagada 2007) and the past two decades have shown an increase in both women's economic contributions (Garcia and Oliveira 2011) and in men's caregiving (Gutmann 2000).

Similar gender-differentiated roles also appear in middle-class United States families. In a review of literature on non-standard work alternatives for married dual-income US couples, Marler and colleagues (2003) argue that the expectations of men as providers and breadwinners leads married men to be less flexible in work arrangements and less likely to take on nonstandard jobs. Married women are more likely to choose part-time or temporary work in order to combine work and family responsibilities, whereas married men who work part-time are less likely to be doing so by voluntary choice. They found a similar pattern among self-employed adults in the United States, with self-employed women taking greater advantage of their job flexibility while

[26] Not to be confused with *marimacha*, which is a derogatory slang term for a lesbian.

self-employed men are more likely to work long hours consistent with their image of themselves as the primary provider for the family (Marler et al 2003).

In contexts where childcare resources are readily available, different decision-making factors come into play and generational changes are once again visible. Although working parents in the Netherlands have had access to public daycare since the 1980s, caregiving by family members is still preferred and parents consider three days per week in daycare to be the maximum reasonable amount (Nakatani 2008). Mothers and fathers both adjust their work schedules so as to allow time with children, or take advantage of extended family as caregivers rather than leaving children in daycare. Despite the fact that most couples surveyed grew up in single-income households, both husbands and wives aim for co-parenting as the ideal goal and new parents of both genders take advantage of parental leave and four-day work weeks in order to achieve that balance. As children grow older, however, it is usually the mother who seeks out part-time work while the father returns to working full-time.

The conflict between women working and "women's work" is certainly not universal. Asante entrepreneurial mothers in Ghana do not see a contradiction between work and motherhood – on the contrary, earning a good income to feed your child is perceived as a key component of mothering, and even more crucial than childcare duties (Clark 2001). As one women told Gracia Clark, there are other adults (i.e. relatives) available who can take good care of her daughter while she is away, but "no one will work for her the way I do" (Clark 2001:107). In matrilineal Asante communities, mothers have access to extended kin as caregivers and resources from the maternal lineage; financial investment on the part of fathers, on the other hand, can be sporadic and unreliable since men are also responsible for their own maternal kin as well as their offspring.

Even with the value placed on economic success for mothers, a "nursing mother" (i.e. any mother of small children) is limited in her choice of work because she must have reliable, constant income for her children. Such women cannot afford to engage in high-profit trading which carries greater financial risk or involves delays in payments. One mother describes how she gave up her profitable cloth business, which required waiting for clients to pay for the goods they ordered, in favor of selling oranges, a business which yielded much less money but where she was guaranteed to bring in at least a minimum income every day (Clark 2001).

The diversification of income streams within households in Latin America goes hand-in-hand with a compartmentalization of expenses along gender lines. Women's income is typically used for everyday expenses (e.g. groceries and children's school supplies) while men's income is used for large-scale expenses such as birthdays and baptisms (Rees 2006). On the inter-household level, the Catholic tradition of *compadrazgo* (godparentage) in Mexico is expanded into another financial resource (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5). Life milestones such as weddings and baptisms have multiple *padrinos* who contribute financially to various aspects of the ceremony, thereby distributing very large expenses throughout an extended network of kin and fictive kin. This tradition of multiple *compadrazgo* appears to be a predominately Mexican one. In an examination of the pan-Latin-American mixing of traditions among immigrant *quinceañeras* (a coming of age debutante event held on a girl's fifteenth birthday), Alvarez (2007) discovered that the formal selection of multiple *padrinos* for a *quinceañera* was one of the few ceremonial features not adopted by other Latino immigrant groups even though informal sponsorship from relatives is common in the form of presenting various accouterments for the event as a gift to the debutante (e.g. by paying for a dress, jewelry, limo ride, or photo session). One young Cuban-American interviewee disparaged the Mexican practice as "begging for your

party," but a Mexican-American adolescent who had recently celebrated her *quinceañera* said that the publicly announced list of contributors brought home to her the sense of being part of a close-knit and supportive community (Alvarez 2007:77).

In the households observed in this study, incomes were often kept separate with family members each retaining their own pool of cash to be used for their own groceries or household expenses. Individual property ownership is salient in peoples' minds, even when the property itself is shared for a common good. I have heard women joke about the arbitrariness of department store loans, even as they and their husbands strategically assigned ownership based on which individual would receive better credit: "We bought the TV in my name," said one, "if we ever break up I can take it from him." Such jokes emphasize the salience of marital troubles and property ownership as a potential problem for many women. Retaining individual ownership over bought or inherited property can be a protective resource for a woman: even when the item itself is used as if it were a shared good, in the event of a separation she can claim the house or car and force him to move out. One mother mentioned having made a purchase under her husband's name because he had better credit, and then offhandedly added that it had been a bad idea because if they separated he would receive the property even though her money had paid for it.

XI. OVERVIEW OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation will examine the lives and livelihoods of entrepreneurial mothers and their families in San Cristobal, looking at their day-to-day economic strategizing, how their integration into social and familial networks provides economic and emotional resources as well as creating social and financial responsibility toward others, and the ways in which children are incorporated into and learn from their parents' activities. Throughout the study I use the small

micro-retail store as a focal point, examining its role as one of several ongoing enterprises and how it is incorporated into economic and family life. The store is an ideal choice for this purpose because of its physical presence in the home space, its accessibility to child observation, and its relative permanence as an ongoing business whose activities can be easily observed.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the entrepreneurial mothers and their families, as well as describing the methodologies used for this study. In Chapter 2 and the beginning of Chapter 3 I also introduce the family store as one element in a diversified household economy, and one example of intersection between individual responsibilities and intra-household aid for both adults and children.

Chapter 3 is a linguistic examination of the interactional structure of store transactions, showing how linguistic resources are used to index context-specific relationships between vendors and customers who are also neighbors, friends, or kin. Through observing and participating in such interactions children learn not only how to buy and sell but also how to construct relationships of expertise and knowledge. This is the focus of Chapter 4, in which I lay out the different participant frameworks occupied by children of varying ages and children's voluntary self-inclusion in store interactions, and how these contrast or overlap with the responsibilities expected of them by adults.

Chapter 5 discusses how economic networks necessary for the multiple income-generating activities of entrepreneurial mothers are intimately linked to kin (and other social) networks and how the responsibilities of household members and extended kin integrate both economic and social/familial components. I highlight how money and family are closely tied in this community, as in the tradition of multiple-*compadrazgo* to finance celebrations of life events

(where monetary aid is imbued with a sense of moral responsibility backed by the formation of new kin ties) and also in day-to-day reliance on family networks for needed skills and resources.

Finally, in the concluding chapter these different perspectives are tied together into a multifaceted examination of the household economy and its participants. I also present some observations on the temporal aspect of diversification and how it can change over time to adjust to changing household conditions and family needs, an area that has as of yet been little studied (Ellis 1998). I conclude with possibilities for future research especially in the domain of children's long-term socialization, and with some observations on the ways in which these entrepreneurial mothers' economic strategies are already being adopted and adapted by the next generation.

CHAPTER 2: Methodology, Demographics and the Family Store

Data for this study consist of nine months of observations conducted over a period of three years: initial recruitment and preliminary observations in 2007, three months of summer fieldwork in 2008 and six months (June through November) in 2009. The 2008 research was funded by two summer fieldwork fellowships from UCLA Department of Anthropology and the UCLA International Institute. The 2009 research was funded by the FPR-UCLA Center for Culture. Dissertation writing was partly funded by a fellowship from the FPR-UCLA CBD in 2011-2012.

Research methods consisted of recorded observations of everyday household activities, informal person-centered interviews, and participant observation (including living in the home of one of my interviewees) over the course of the nine months of research. Tables 2.1 and 2.2, in Section IX of this chapter, list the participants and the type of data collected from each family.

I. PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Participants were recruited through snowball sampling (Bernard 2002), starting with individuals and families with whom I had built social relationships while conducting Masters' fieldwork during the summers of 2004-2006. While the small home stores of the sort that I wished to study are ubiquitous throughout San Cristobal (and indeed are the most common sort of business outside of the central commercial area), the proposed research would involve extensive time spent in families' private domestic spaces, in close proximity to both their children and their monetary transactions. These are not domains that San Cristobal families tend to make accessible to strangers (see section VIII on how the physical layout of stores is designed

to protect vendors' privacy), and I quickly realized that recruitment would depend upon making use of community networks and gaining personal introductions from friends or family. In some cases, friends and colleagues introduced me to friends whom they knew had stores and children (this being the brief summary of the research focus) – or friends whose relatives had stores and children. In other cases I myself approached storeowners whose businesses I had frequented over several years and who knew me as a visiting student.

II. OBSERVATIONS OF HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES

Four families were selected for regular observation. In each case I observed and recorded household and store routines for three to four hours on a weekly basis over the course of several months. Activities were audio or video recorded depending on participants' preference. Two families were observed in both 2008 and 2009, the others only during one of these years.

I began recruitment in 2007 and conducted one observation session with each family, both to gain data in order to structure my future research plans and also to give family members a better sense of what participation in the project would entail.

During the first observations I was treated as a guest and the mothers whose stores I was observing attempted to engage me in conversation, asking questions about my family and background. I used this opportunity to reciprocate with questions about their own lives and routines. I also used the initial observation period as a way to accustom children to the recording devices, allowing them to watch over my shoulder as I filmed Mother or a sibling or to see how the audio recorder worked. The earliest footage is accompanied by commentaries of "I can see you on the camera! Now it's my turn, can you see me?" or "Sing into the recorder – okay now play it back!" The novelty quickly wore off, and by the second or third visit the children were

happy to ignore me while the adults went about their regular chores with occasional conversations while they worked or watched television.

III. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

III.1 Living in the Field:

During part of the fieldwork I lived in the home of an entrepreneurial mother (Doña Francisca) who, as one of her several income-earning activities, rents out a spare room to foreign students or volunteers, usually affiliated with one of the summer language programs or one of the many humanitarian organizations. While living with Doña Francisca, I ate meals with her family, accompanied her on errands that took her all over the city, and interviewed her about her current and past businesses. I also became friends with her daughters; her daughter Margarita's wedding serves as my core example of extended *compadrazgo* in Chapter 5.

Doña Francisca is a friendly and sociable woman (another reason, I suspect, that she liked renting to students). After a number of informal conversations with her about my research project and her business experience, I asked whether I could conduct recorded interviews as part of my study. She was happy to talk about her work, as well as extremely insightful, eloquently describing the enjoyment that she took in trying her hand at new businesses as well as her reasons for selecting this or that enterprise. Observing and talking to her gave me a greater awareness of the ways that entrepreneurial mothers structure their diversified economic portfolios and was invaluable in understanding my observations of the other participants.

III.2 Focal Families:

In addition to scheduled observations of families, I also interacted with them on a regular basis as a customer and neighbor, as well as participating in family events such as birthdays and a wedding. As a way of giving back to the participants, I brought toys for the children on the first

trip of each field season, took photos of family members, and in some cases assisted participants in purchasing kitchen appliances that are much more expensive in San Cristobal than in the U.S. I also reimbursed participants for their time at the end of each field season, although I found that, in keeping with their own ideas of shared versus paid labor (discussed in further detail in Chapter 5), several of them had considered participation in the project to be a favor for a friend and were uncomfortable accepting money for something that had not cost them much effort. One woman, who was in need of money for family expenses, hesitated over the payment, and then said she was embarrassed (*me da pena*) because her aunt, the woman who had introduced me to her, would get mad. When I went to ask the aunt, she responded, "She doesn't want me to think she's taking advantage of you," referring of course to my status as a foreigner with disposable income, and suggested I tell her niece that the money was a grant from my school. Using this tactic, I was able to give back to those who had helped me with the project, while allowing both of us to maintain a social relationship based on sharing favors but not money.

IV. OBSERVATIONS OF A COSMETICS VENDING RECRUITMENT GROUP

In 2009 one of the participants, who had noticed my interest in Avon vending, offered to introduce me to a neighbor who had just begun recruiting vendors for another direct selling company. I attended and was given permission to audio record five meetings of this vending group. I also had extensive conversations with Anita and Tomás, two group leaders who were very helpful in socializing me into the group and providing their own view of the vendor's relationship with the parent company. (They were also eager to enroll me as a vendor but this was not possible because of my visa restrictions.) Data from these observations are briefly discussed in Chapter 5, Section VI, where I examine the role of an activity-centered group as a professional support network. Although the cosmetics vendors are not focal to this dissertation,

attending their meetings and speaking with members gave me a more thorough understanding of how a direct selling catalog company works and how different individuals make use of its resources as part of their own economic enterprises. Since catalog vending is a popular supplementary activity among the entrepreneurial mothers I studied, having an insider's perspective into their workings of the system was an aid to the study as a whole.

V. CHAPTER ANALYSES OF CORPUS

The chapters of this dissertation focus on different subsets of the data corpus.

Chapter 3 on the linguistic structure of store transactions is based on audio and video recordings of store transactions that occurred during my observations sessions (primarily those of 2009). I collected, tabulated, and transcribed the commercial transactions that occurred during recorded observations (with a focus on those which occurred in 2009) to examine the micro-interactional structure of a sales transaction and how this linguistic structure relates to participant relationships.

Chapter 4 on children's participation in the store is also relies upon the corpus of recordings as well as including interviews with the parents of the children whom I observed. The children of Doña Elena and Doña Angela are the main focus of this chapter.

Chapter 5, which focuses on the longstanding social networks used by entrepreneurial mothers (and by families in San Cristobal in general), draws from retrospective interviews and from participant observation and field-notes over the entire course of my research. In this case the activities I observed on a day-to-day basis take on significance when seen in the larger context of families' lives and shared histories. Chapter 5 also makes use of observations of and interviews with the cosmetics vending group.

VI. PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

All names in this study are pseudonyms. Primary pseudonyms are listed in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, but in some cases it was necessary to also use a secondary pseudonym for the same participant. A few of the events that I discuss in this study – for instance Margarita and David's wedding in 2009 – are public knowledge within the community and could easily be used to identify the individuals in question even without my listing their real names. Similarly, Chapter 5 discusses examples involving networks of extended family members and this information, in conjunction with the demographic information about participants' stores and households listed in Chapter 3 could also compromise confidentiality. For this reason, an entirely different set of names was used in Chapter 5. I trust that this multiplication of identities will not cause confusion for the reader; in cases where consistency of identity is important for my analysis I have simply selected examples in which using the same name will not be problematic.

The reasons for such care in participant confidentiality are twofold. The first, of course, is out of respect to the families who so kindly allowed me access to their private homes, personal lives and livelihoods. Additionally, some of the activities involved may result in legal or financial problems for those involved. Many of the small home-based businesses run by individuals in San Cristobal are not actually registered as such: when one diversifies one's efforts, the individual profit from a single such endeavor is so tiny that it would be outweighed by the additional taxes and fees imposed on a business. For instance, electricity consumption for a commercial building is charged at a rate nearly double that of a home and, as noted previously, entrepreneurial mothers run their stores out of their own living rooms; I know of at least one business which had a separate meter installed and room in which the store was located was billed at a higher rate than the rest of the house. I deliberately did not ask any of the women in my

study about the status of any of their enterprises, and they did not raise the topic during interviews. While this particular individual was able to cover the higher electric bill, for other women the financial burden of doing so might be enough to require that the enterprise be abandoned, thereby damaging the household income. Participants gave verbal and written consent to their inclusion in the project, with one of the stipulations being that their identities would remain anonymous in any presentations and publications.

VII. TRANSCRIPTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

VII.1 Transcription and Translation:

Recordings of observations were first coded based on activity and topic, with store transactions being marked for transcription. Interviews were transcribed and coded simultaneously. As a fluent speaker I found it more accurate as well as more comfortable to use the original Spanish transcripts and recordings for all data analysis, later translating excerpts into English as needed for inclusion in presentations or dissertation chapters. All translations were double-checked by a native Spanish speaker.

Transcription is in itself an act of analysis and the transcripts in these chapters include varying levels of detail depending on their purpose. Thus, the transcripts of child corrections in Chapter 4 Section III include body language and speech overlaps, because such characteristics are part of the child's self-presentation as an expert. The vendors' narratives in Chapter 5 have relatively little paralinguistic elements, because the main focus is on their descriptions of vending and recruitment.

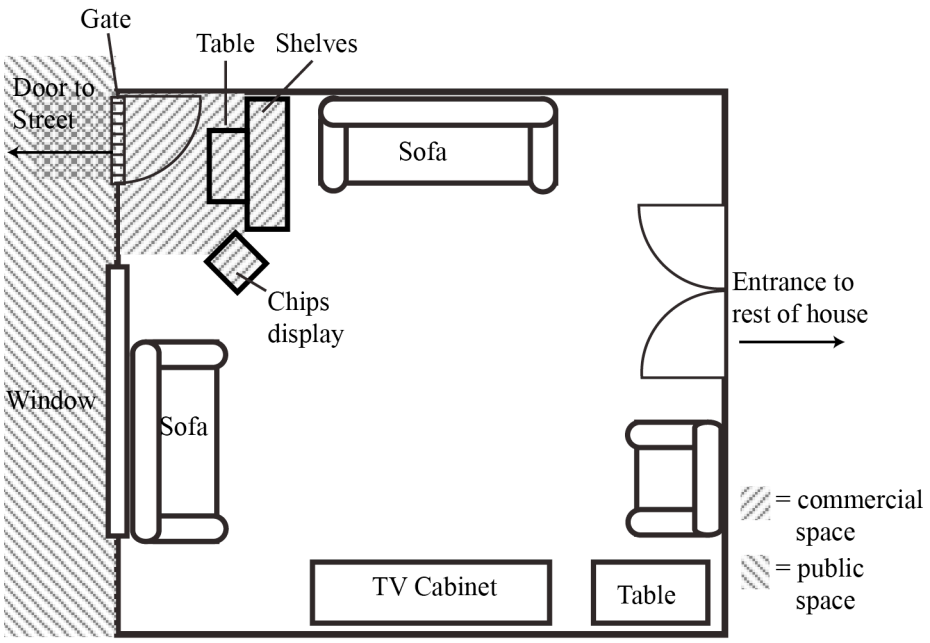
VII.2 Images:

The line drawings in Chapters 3 and 4 were made by myself from photographs and video frame grabs, first using Adobe Photoshop to sketch over the original image and then exporting

the drawing into Adobe Illustrator to convert it into a printable vector image. In addition to protecting participant privacy, the use of line art allows the reader to more clearly see the salient features of the interaction that are being illustrated. The act of transcribing speech (Ochs 1979) and even the act of video recording (Duranti 2006) are analytical, in that the transcriber chooses what features to include and the videographer chooses where to point the camera. Similarly, in creating illustrations I had to decide which elements were key to the interaction, to what degree the background was important, and whether to include the entire video frame or only one part (e.g. the hands of the adult and child as they exchange money for candy).

VIII. PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF THE STORE

The stores in this study are set up in participants' own homes. As discussed in Chapter 1, the practice of having a store in some portion of the home space is a common occurrence in San Cristobal. While some of the larger stores have a separate room, most occupy part of a room subdivided by a curtain, a display stand, or some other form of partition. Below is the layout of the main room in Doña Elena's house; this is the smallest store in my study:



Doña Elena's Store
(Not to Scale)

As can be seen, Doña Elena's store displays are clustered around the front door. This layout creates two spatial boundaries: one between the street and the vendor's private property, the other between the commercial store space and the rest of the household. These two boundaries allow differing levels of access to different individuals.

VIII.1 Commercial Space:

Placing merchandise in the door allows customers easy visual access to the store merchandise, while at the same time the tall display screens the family space from the view of outsiders. Doña Elena can therefore keep her door open to attract sales while still maintaining privacy. Even though they are in the same room, setting up the store in this fashion creates a distinct boundary between the commercial space and the residential, the latter of which is off limits to customers, in much the same way as if the store were in a separate room. Having the store in the doorway allows vendors to invite customers in to examine merchandise without having to walk them through the family space.

VIII.2 Dividing the Store from the Street:

A waist-high gate across the doorway keeps out stray dogs and small children without impeding view of the store. Although the gate could be opened, customers do not do so without permission. Instead, they knock on the door or call out to gain the vendor's attention (see Chapter 3 for an examination of attention-gaining strategies). The gate also prevents Doña Elena's youngest child from wandering into the street unsupervised, but I have seen such gates across many stores without children as well.

Although their layouts differ, all of the stores in the study (and indeed all of the small home businesses observed) maintain these two divisions: 1) the commercial space is always near the street, accessible without going through the family space; 2) boundaries always separate street from business, and business from home. This is true regardless of the type of business. In Don Luis's *ciber* (Internet center) customers pay for internet access and computer use and therefore spend a considerable amount of time within the business space. In contrast, in small stores there is very little browsing and the customer leaves after having selected and paid for their merchandise. Even so, Don Luis's business is set up in a similar fashion to allow varying degrees of access and privacy. The front door separates the public street from the *ciber*, a space that, although accessible to anyone off the street, is the property of Don Luis's family (who can deny access if the *ciber* is full or is about to close). A second door in the back connects the *ciber* with the family's living room and allows whichever family member is tending the business to move easily between both spaces. Although Don Luis, his wife, or his son are usually in the *ciber* using one of the spare computers, they can also keep an eye on the business through the mirrored glass in the back of the room. Like Doña Elena's *abarrotes* (dry goods store), the *ciber*

itself is accessible to customers but marked off from the home. The main difference is that *ciber* customers are expected to spend a longer period of time in this intermediate space.

IX. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Below is a table of the primary focal families in this study. I conducted regular observations of everyday household and economic activities for four families and engaged in interviews with several more.

IX.1 Observations of Daily Routines:

Table 2.1: Observations of Household Activities:

Family	Store	Members	Children's Ages	Total Hrs Recorded Obs	Type of Data
Angela	abarrotes/ pharmacy	2 adults; 2 children	In 2007: 3yr, 7yr	3 in 2007	audio
			In 2008: 4yr ,8yr	12 in 2008	
			In 2009: 5yr, 9yr	21 in 2009	
Elena	abarrotes	4 adults; 3 children (+ 2 teens in 2009)	In 2007 2yr, 1yr	3 in 2007	video
			In 2008: 3yr, 2yr, 9mo	8 in 2008	
			In 2009: 4yr, 3yr, 2yr, 16yr, 18yr	19 in 2009	
Lola[27]	abarrotes	2 adults; 2 teenagers	In 2007: 14yr, 16yr	3 in 2007	audio
			In 2008: 15yr, 17yr	9 in 2008	
Mari	abarrotes	3 adults; 1 child	12yr	5 in 2009	field notes
Luís	ciber	3 adults; 1 child	n/a	3 in 2007[28]	field notes
Francisca	papelería	4 adults	early 20s	n/a[29]	field notes
			TOTAL:	86 hrs	

[27] Between 2008 and 2009, Doña Lola closed her store for personal family reasons. Doña Mari was recruited in 2009 as a replacement.

[28] Between 2007 and 2008 supervision of the *ciber* shifted from Don Luis, who had given me permission to observe, to another relative who was not comfortable participating in the study.

[29] Although I did not conduct scheduled recorded observations of Doña Francisca's business, I was able to observe its workings first hand through living in her house.

Table 2.2: Observations of other Commercial Activities:

Person	Type of Business	Members	Total Hrs Observed	Type of Data
Cosmetics vending group (led by Anita and Tomás)	recruitment group	aprx 7 adults	aprx 15 in 2009	audio
Carlos and Josefina	school lunch counter	2 adults; multiple child customers	aprx 10 in 2008	video

IX.2 Interviews:

Several other women participated in retrospective and descriptive interviews, talking about their current enterprises and, for those with adult offspring, their past experiences as entrepreneurial mothers with small children. Members of the catalog-vending group (male and female) also agreed to be interviewed. Some of the interviewees who appear in this dissertation include: Anita, Carmen, Francisca, Luisa, Norma Susi and Tomás. In addition, others, upon learning about the topic of my research, agreed to show me their businesses or discuss their lives, including the numerous family members with whom I interacted in the course of the research.

CHAPTER 3: BUYING AND SELLING
A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF STORE TRANSACTIONS & THEIR SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

I. PROLOGUE: YOUR CORNER STORE

> *When you arrive at the entrance to your corner abarrotes, three things immediately catch your attention. First is the waist-high gate blocking the doorway, which prevents stray dogs and small children from wandering into the house. Second is the colorful display of merchandise: brightly packaged snack foods and candy take center stage, interspersed with more mundane necessities like matches, rice, canned chili peppers, and toilet paper. The third is the complete absence of anyone watching the store. A brightly colored cloth hanging behind the merchandise display blocks your view of the rest of the room, making it impossible to see whether anyone is actually nearby.*

For many entrepreneurial mothers, the home store is just one of a multitude of activities occupying her attention at any given moment. While at home, she may be cooking, cleaning, keeping the children out of trouble, or relaxing with her favorite *telenovela* (soap opera). The small stores I examine in this study average approximately two purchases in an hour, but sometimes an entire afternoon may go by without a single customer. Rather than waiting in the store for these sparse visits, storeowners take care of other necessities, expecting potential customers to make their presence known by knocking or shouting.

> *The door to your corner abarrotes is metal, painted over in a bright color, perhaps red, perhaps green or pink. Rapping your knuckles on it produces a booming noise which you imagine being heard by all the neighbors. As you strain your ears for a sound of life in the house, you hear a voice shout: "To-CAAN!" (They're knocking!) After a minute, a woman emerges from inside the house. "Yes?" she says without preamble. "What do you want?"*

In this chapter I examine the linguistic structure of store transactions, placing special emphasis on how the social relationships between participants are reflected in the turn-by-turn

structure of the interaction. I also discuss how the interaction is structured by the physical layout of the store and by participants' assumptions about the purpose of the store.

II. DEMOGRAPHICS OF STORE TRANSACTIONS

As noted in prior chapters, the customers in these micro-retail businesses are by and large neighbors living within a few blocks of the store. Because of its close proximity, the store is used as a place to obtain immediate necessities or impulse-buy candies rather than for planned shopping. One of the advantages of micro-retail businesses is convenience: being able to immediately buy only what is needed at the moment when it is needed. Table 3.1 (below) outlines the demographics of the store transactions discussed in this chapter:

Table 3.1 Customer and Vendor Demographics

CUSTOMER	VENDOR					TOT
	MOTHER	OTHER ADULT	CHILD	MULTIPLE	UNKNOWN	
ADULT	9	3	2	2 (mother + adult)		16
CHILD	36	8	1	1 (mother + child)		46
TEEN	1					1
MULTIPLE CATEGORIES	4 1 child + adult 3 child +teen					4
UNKNOWN	2				1	3
TOTAL	52	11	3	3	1	70

The majority of purchases (64%) were made by local children. Since the vendor was almost always the mother or another adult in the household, behavioral distinctions between child and adult vendors are will not be addressed.

Most purchases are small, with 88% of observed transactions (62 out of 70) involving the purchase of a single item, and the majority of purchases in each of the observed stores were from children buying snacks.[30] Table 3.2 displays the breakdown of purchases by category:

Table 3.2 Types of Purchases

CUSTOMER	SNACKS	GROCERIES *	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
ADULT	5	7	4	16
CHILD	33	10	3	46
TEEN	1			1
MULTIPLE CATEGORIES	4 1 child+adult 3 child+teen			4
UNKNOWN	2		1	3
TOTAL	45	17	8	70
* Also includes mixed (snack + necessities) purchases.				

I define "Snack" purchases as those consisting only of candy, chips, sodas or other *chucherías* (junk food) intended for immediate personal consumption. "Groceries" re any items likely to be used at home, including cooking ingredients, large (2 liter) sodas, medicines, and toiletries. Mixed purchases (e.g. a candy and can of coffee) were also classified as groceries, meaning that the frequency of snack purchases is slightly under-estimated. Even with this under-estimate, snack purchases formed 64% of all observed purchases, and 73% of child purchases. Although adults were slightly more likely to be in the store for necessities, the large preponderance of child customers means that nearly half of all the store's transactions (47%) involved children buying chips and candies. Prices ranged from 50 centavos (5 cents) to 20 pesos

[30] For numerical comparisons purchases were categorized as "Snacks" (small items to be consumed immediately) or "Groceries" (items intended to be taken home, including medicines from the *farmácia*) and customers were categorized as "Child(ren)," "Adult(s)," "Teen(s)" or "Mixed Group." For households observed in both 2008 and 2009 I calculated the percentages for each year separately. In all but one household, children's candy purchases out-numbered total combined grocery purchases. (The one exception was a house on the edge of town, which had only 15 purchases during the month I observed it, and mostly adult customers.)

($2), with chewing gum at the low end of the range and *sabritas*[31] (chips) and boxed juices at the high end. With the small purchase size and infrequency of customers, these small home stores were not large contributors to the household economy, however their low labor and capital requirements made them valuable as supplemental income. Customers will typically buy only one or two items, paid for in small change, although sometimes the same person will come back for multiple separate purchases over the course of an afternoon, especially in the case of children playing nearby.

III. THE STRUCTURE OF A STORE TRASACTION

The most complete structural examination of service interactions published to date is that presented by Merritt (1976). Using a corpus of audio-recorded interactions at a U.S. university campus store, Merritt diagrammed out the typical sequencing of turns in a single-item purchase. This script contained 21 conversational turns, including: offers of service, requests for merchandise, questions about merchandise price and selection, payment options (cash or credit), verbal declaration of the total price, packaging options, and formulaic closings (Merritt 1975:345). Transactions in small San Cristobal stores are considerably shorter, consisting of at maximum 15 possible conversational turns, and typically consisting of less than ten turns. I group these turns into six transaction components, which will be discussed in detail in this chapter. Table 3.3, at the end of this section, presents an overview.

This difference in length between the U.S. and San Cristobal transactions is due in part to physical and organizational differences in the businesses themselves. The small size of micro-

[31] Sabritas is the Mexican distributor of Frito-Lay snacks and is used as a generic term encompassing a wide variety of pre-packaged chips and snacks.

retail stores, their informal nature[32], and their presence within the household afford certain forms of interaction between customer and vendor: customers need to gain the absent vendor's attention, customers must ask the vendor for the items they wish to buy, and payment is always in cash and usually in near-exact change. Transactions in home stores also lack extra amenities such as bags, receipts, or the choice of payment (cash or credit), which formed part of the interactional script detailed by Merritt (1975) for urban U.S. businesses.

Customers' prior knowledge of store merchandise allows for further truncating: verbal discussion of payment is frequently omitted since customers often know the rough price of the item they wish to buy and have the payment ready at the point of requesting the merchandise.

Vendor and customer are engaged in a shared course of action – namely to carry out an exchange of food and goods – which can be done with out extra verbal explanations. A focus on talk in the context of an activity (Goodenough 1981; Goodwin and Goodwin 1999) or sequentially unfolding project (what Linell 2009 terms a "communicative project") draws attention to the purpose of the conversation rather than its inherent structure. In this case, examining the transaction as a communicative project may well explain the apparent lack of communication: customer and vendor already have most of the information needed to carry out the activity (e.g. knowledge of store merchandise, availability and prices) and minimal requests such as "What?" and "Give me X" are understood in the context of the ongoing project. An understanding of the context allows for cases like Example 3.2 where a pointing gesture is sufficient as a request, and becomes quite salient in the cases examined in Chapter 4, Section III, where adults and older children scaffold small children into purchasing by eliciting their

[32] By informal I am not referring to these stores' positioning in the informal economy (although that is certainly true) but rather to the fact that they hold sporadic and irregular hours, have changing merchandise and uncertain restocking schedules and may shut down or reappear depending on the needs of the family.

preferences and treating their simple gestures and nods as valid requests for merchandise. Gauging of customer's prior knowledge can be key to some interactions, as in Kuroshima's (2010) study of a sushi restaurant in which the chef's decision on whether or not to repeat a customer's order was not simply intended to verify the customer's words but based on based on the chef's determination of whether the customer had appropriate cultural knowledge about the food he or she was requesting.

But even beyond the differences in store setup and customer knowledge, San Cristobal service interactions frequently make use of fewer verbal components than do those in the U.S. businesses studied by Merritt: greetings and offers of service are almost entirely absent, the vendor often omits a verbal statement of the price of the merchandise, and customers will frequently leave without any parting words as soon as they receive the desired merchandise. The interaction below is fairly typical of the species; one sequence consists of seven interactional turns (of which three are nonverbal):

Example 3.1:

1 ((knocking)) 2 VEN: ((getting up from sofa)) Qué? *What?*	Getting Attention (& Response)
3 CUS: A cuánto cuestan los sabritas? *How much are the chips?* 4 VEN: A cinco. *Five [pesos].*	Prefacing Query (& Response)
5 CUS: Me (dé) uno. *I'll take one.*	Request
6 ((VEN takes a package from the shelf, hands chips to CUS, takes money))	Exchange of Goods and Payment
7 ((VEN puts money in box as CUS leaves.))	Parting (nonverbal)

In this example, the knock at the door serves as a nonverbal attention-getting device, in much the same way as a telephone bell serves to summon the recipient to the phone (Schegloff

1968, discussed in further detail in the section on attention getting devices below). The exchange of goods for money, which is the central goal of the interaction, is also accomplished nonverbally, and the interaction often ends without a closing: the two participants turning away once their task has been accomplished.

While example 3.1 above is fairly typical, in some cases, the interaction can be even more truncated and verbally minimal, such as the following instance in which the entire transaction, apart from the vendor's initial question and the customer's merchandise request, is silent:

Example 3.2:

((knocking)) VEN ((from her chair)): Qué? *What?*	Getting Attention (& Response)
CUS: ((incomprehensible, presumably the request)) ((VEN gets up, goes to door)) ((CHILD CUS is pointing through the gate; an older girl is next to him.))	Request
((VEN picks up item.)) ((VEN hands item to CUS, takes coin.))	Exchange of Goods and Payment
((The children run away.)) ((VEN puts money in box, turns away))	Parting

This abbreviated structure is in direct contradiction to other cross-cultural studies of commercial transactions, which argue that service interactions tend to be even more ritualized than social conversations, having more formulaic exchanges and both a greater number and a higher frequency of explicit markers of politeness and personal interest (Traverso 2001; Hewett 2002). Bailey's 1997 examination of Korean-American storekeepers contradicts this pattern and links storekeepers lack of sociability to cultural norms of negative face and respect for privacy. Among these San Cristobal stores, the lack of explicit greetings, closings and rituals of social

interaction is notable precisely because verbal greetings *are* an expected form of politeness in social encounters. Through an examination of the physical and economic structure of the business itself as well as of the interactional relationships between participants, I will examine this seeming contradiction.

IV. INTERACTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Unlike in the adult-adult economic transactions which have been examined in other societies (Bailey 1997; Kuroshima 2010; Merritt 1976; Traverso 2001; among others), there are few markers of politeness or "ritual" social exchanges in the store transactions of San Cristobal home businesses. The lack of politeness markers may be explained by the fact that customers are known neighbors who shop there for convenience, therefore vendors do not need to stand on formality or foster customer loyalty. Because vendor and customers see each other repeatedly throughout the day, transactions may be seen as part of an ongoing interaction in which greetings are given less importance (Schegloff, personal communication). In such situations, participants are seen to be in a "continuing state of incipient talk" which does not require a separate opening to initiate a new interaction (Schegloff and Sacks 1984:96; but see also Goffman 1971 and Duranti 1997 on greetings as bracketing a new interaction). What begins as a minimal transaction, however, can easily evolve into joking, gossiping, or chit-chat, indicating that a lack of a explicit greeting should not be taken as a sign of coldness or of one's being in a hurry.

V. COMPONENT PARTS

The store transactions observed in this study can be broken down into six transaction components. Three of these are optional and often omitted (shaded in gray). Of the remainder two typically consist of verbal exchanges while the exchange sequence is generally non-verbal.

The *Attention Getting* and *Request* components also contain significant subcomponents which will be discussed in further detail.

Table 3.3: Components of a Store Transaction

I. Attention-Getting Devices	When the vendor is not present in the store space (which is most of the time), the customer must gain her attention, through knocking, ringing a doorbell or shouting, and bring her into the store space in order to make a purchase. The vendor's response to these attention-getting devices is to enter the store area and ask the customer what s/he wants. In this data corpus, the customer rarely has to solicit the vendor's attention more than once (but see *Notification*, below). In some cases it is the vendor who attempts to gain the attention of a loitering child who may or may not be waiting to buy something.
(Notification)	News of the customer's presence is sometimes repeated by a third party (often one of the vendor's children): in such cases, the notifier will either hear the customer's summons or see the customer at the door and loudly call out to gain the vendor's attention.
II. Greeting	Very rarely the vendor or customer will offer a greeting such as "Buenas tardes," (*Good afternoon*). In lieu of a greeting, the vendor might occasionally invite the customer into the store to examine the merchandise more closely.
III. Preface to Request	Customers may introduce the merchandise they wish to buy by asking about its availability or its characteristics (e.g. price or flavor).

IV. Request	The customer asks for the item he wishes to buy. Occasionally the vendor states the price of the item before handing it over.
(Scaffolding)	Sometimes older customers will attempt to elicit a request from an accompanying younger child. Scaffolding is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.
V. Exchange of Goods and Money	The vendor and customer exchange goods and payment. This action often occurs simultaneously and may or may not involve a verbal component. If change is due, the vendor will retrieve it from the cashbox while the customer waits.
VI. Closing	A transaction is often completed without any sort of verbal closing: the customer simply leaves after receiving his or her merchandise or change while the vendor returns to the domestic space. In some cases there is a verbal acknowledgement such as "bueno" (*Okay*) or "ya" (*done*)

In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss each of these components in greater detail, examining both the interactional structure and how these interactions build upon the relationships between participants and the perceived purpose of the store itself.

V.1 Attention-Getting Devices:

When not actively tending a customer, the proprietor of the home-store is often engaging in other household activities and may not be visible to the customer. The first step in a commercial interaction is therefore to get her attention and bring her into visual range of the customer. The table below displays the frequency of different forms of attention-getting strategies in the data, sorted by age of customer:

Table 3.4: Ways of Getting Attention

CUSTOMER	AGENT					
	CUSTOMER	VENDOR	Other HHM*	NONE: VENDOR IN STORE	TOTAL KNOWN	UNKNOWN
ADULT	10	0	0	1	11	5
CHILD	24	4	1	3	32	14
TEEN	/	/	/	/	/	1
MULTIPLE CATEGORIES	2 child + adult child + teen	/	/	1 child + teen	3	1 child + teen
UNKNOWN	1	1	/	/	2	1
TOTAL	37	5	1	5	48 (out of 70)	

* = Another household member notices the customer *before* the customer knocks.

Attention getting devices fell into three categories: the customer attempting to gain the attention of an absent vendor, the vendor attempting to gain the attention of a potential customer (usually a child loitering around the entrance), or the null case in which the vendor was already in the store when the customer arrived and no attention-getting devices were used.

Customer Gets the Vendor's Attention:

In most of the transactions (77% of known instances, and 54% of all transactions), the vendor was not in the store space, and sometimes not in visual range, when the customer arrived. As noted in earlier chapters, small home stores tend to be left untended while owners take care of other household activities, and customers know what to do when approaching a seemingly deserted store. The most common means of getting a vendor's attention is to knock loudly on the door, or ring a doorbell if there is one. Most homes in the residential parts of San Cristobal have sturdy metal doors and knocking or rattling creates a noise which can be heard throughout the house as in the example below where a customer interrupts playtime:

Example 3.3:
Vendor is sitting on the sofa, pretending to be a restaurant customer. Niece (4 yrs) has just handed her a toy plate. (Child customer; Mother is the vendor)

NIECE: Toma.
Here.
VEN: Señora sus huevos [no tienen sal.
Ma'am, your eggs [have no salt.

[((knocking))	CUS gets VEN's Attn

VEN (standing up): Le falta sal.
It needs salt.

((VENDOR enters the store area.))	VEN Enters Store Area
VEN: Qué? *What?*	Verbal Response/ Initiating Transaction

CUS: A cuánto cuesta los sabritas?
How much are the chips?

"Quiero Comprar":

In some cases, a customer will call into the house, if there is no evidence of people near the store area. This strategy is used more often by children calling out "Quiero comprar!" (*I want to buy!)* although there is one adult example (Example 3.7) which will be discussed momentarily.

Example 3.4:
The family and guests are gathered in the living room; the adults watch a movie while the children play. (Child customer; Father is the vendor.)

CUS: Quiero comprar. *I want to buy.*	CUS gets VEN's Attention

((UNCLE leans forward, looks in direction of door.))
UNC: Van!
They're coming!

((UNCLE leans back as VENDOR stands up and enters store))	VEN Enters Store Space
VEN: Si [? *Yes [?*	Verbal Response/ Initiation of Transaction

CUS (as soon as VENDOR is in sight):
[Tiene canela?
[*Do you have cinnamon?*

In the observed data, "Quiero comprar" primarily occurred in situations in which family members were in front room and visible to a customer standing in the doorway. In the example above, it was Uncle, who was sitting closest to the door, who answered the notification after visually checking to see if there was a customer. Father was in the back corner of the room and neither visible from, nor able to see, the doorway.[33]

Vendor Gets the Customer's Attention:

Generally it is the arriving customer who must gain the vendor's attention, but occasionally the vendor will notice a small child hovering around the door and attempt to prompt a transaction request. (All instances of this sort of attention-getting involved the smallest store in the study; one in which the doorway was easily visible from much of the living room.)

Example 3.5: Child Customer; Mother is the vendor.

((Vendor puts coin in box, turns back to door as Small Girl leaves.))
((Vendor sees Boy standing by the door.))

VEN: Quieres algo Alan? *Do you want something Alan?* VEN: Quieres? No? *Do you want [something]? No?*	VEN gets CUS' Attention
VEN: Vas a comprar algo? *Are you going to buy something?*	VEN Solicits Request
BOY: Hay Sabritas? *Are there Sabritas?*	Preface Question

While in Merritt's study, the customer's and vendor's co-presence is followed by the vendor's formal offer of service, in San Cristobal stores the mere presence of the participants in the same space is sufficient for the customer to begin the transaction. Nearly all of the instances of vendors attempting to gain customers' attention (except the one case in which the identity of the customer was unknown) involved small child customers. Except in special circumstances,

[33] While mother is the primary supervisor of the store, other family members will occasionally tend to customers. In this case, Mother was in the middle of a sewing project and had her hands full.

such as the case of a loitering child, a vendor's offer of service is not necessary to begin a transaction, as seen in the following section.

Vendor is Already in the Store:

In Merritt's model of service interactions, the customer's presence in the store space constitutes a tacit request for service, just as the vendor's presence is a tacit offer of service. In San Cristobal home stores this sort of encounter is fairly rare simply because the vendor is usually *not* in the store upon the customer's arrival. In a few cases (5 instances, totaling 10% of documented transaction-beginnings, or 7% of the total corpus) the vendor was already in the store space when the customer arrived, either looking outside or selling to another customer. In these situations, her presence within the store space was interpreted as an offer of service and the customer proceeded immediately into asking about the merchandise without any preamble:

Example 3.6:
The Vendor (Mother) is standing just inside the doorway while her children play on the sidewalk. A teenage girl (TG) and a younger girl (YG) arrive.

1 TG:	Bueno tal vez. *Well maybe.*	(Girls' ongoing
2 YG:	Tal vez! *Maybe*!	conversation)
3 TG:	Ahí 'stá. *There it is.*	
4 ((The girls approach the vendor in the doorway))		CUS and VEN in Same Space
5 YG:	No venden chicharrín de papas? *Do[n't] you sell potato chicharrín?*	Direct Request
6 ((They step into the doorway, where Vendor is standing))		
7 VEN:	No ten:go, solo de estos. *I don't ha:ve any, only this type.*	

Here, the customers switch over from their conversation-in-progress (lines 1-3) straight into a question about the store merchandise, without requiring any introductions or negotiation regarding the genre of the planned interaction.

Problematic Cases of Attention-Getting:

Attention-getting devices such as summons and directives serve the purpose of bringing the customer and vendor into proximity so they can easily interact (Goodwin 2006). If omitted or done improperly, attempts at attention-getting can also cause complications. In one recorded transaction, an adult attempted to use the request itself as a way of bringing the vendor into the store; however this strategy was not effective since the vendor did not understand him and he had to repeat himself when she finally arrived:

Example 3.7:

Mother and Alicia (Researcher) are the living room, watching a soap opera.

CUS ((shouting from outside)): Tiene Coca? *Do you[formal] have Coke?*	CUS gets VEN's Attention / Request Preface

CUS: ((incomprehensible))
((banging on door))
VEN: Coca dice?
Is he saying Coke?
ALI: No sé qué dice.
I don't know what he's saying.

((VENDOR and ALICIA go into the front room))	VEN Enters Store Space.
CUS: Hay Coca grande? *Is there any large Coke?*	Request Preface

As an attention-getting device, the customer's strategy was successful since his shouting brought the vendor into the store space. It was not a successful attempt at requesting merchandise, however, since after the vendor's arrival the customer had to re-initiate the transaction by asking a second time about the Coke.

"What do you want?" Vendor Initiates the Transaction:

The vendor's usual response upon arriving in the store space is brief and to the point: "Qué?" *(What?)* or occasionally "Qué quieres [comprar]?" (*What do you want [to buy]?*)

Example 3.10:
Adult customer; Mother is the vendor.

((doorbell rings))
((Mother gets up from sofa and goes into store))

VEN: Qué?	Verbal
What?	response

CUS: Shampoo tiene?
Do you[formal] have shampoo?

In Merritt's model, the statement "Qué [quieres]?" could be categorized as Formal Offer of Service, equivalent to the more polite "May I help you?" In the local context of home store transactions, the vendor's statement serves a dual purpose. First, it initiates the transaction by prompting the customer to state his intentions, in the same way as would an offer of service. Secondly, "Qué?" is also a response[34] to the customer's knock and in this role serves as an indicator that the customer has successfully gained the vendor's attention. This latter function of "Qué?" is evidenced by the fact that it is only used when the vendor approaches an already present customer. When the vendor is in the store space, she does not address arriving customers and they do not wait for her to do so. Schegloff (1968) categorizes such responses as the second half of a two-part Summons/Answer sequence, in which the first part consists of a nonverbal signal such as a telephone ring – or, in this case, a knock on the door. The frequent lack of greetings in these transactions[35] can be partly explained by the structure of the service initiation. Whereas a telephonic "Hello" is a response to a summons, it is also a greeting to be responded to with a similar greeting. By phrasing her response in the form of a question, the vendor elicits a

[34] In conversation analysis it would be considered Second Pair Part, with the First Pair Part being the knock itself.

[35] While store transactions are not "conversations" in the typical sense of the word, Schegloff uses the term to cover a wide variety of verbal interactions, including "chats as well as service contacts, therapy sessions as well as asking for and getting the time of day, press conferences as well as exchanged whispers of 'sweet nothings'" (Schegloff 1968:1076).

relevant answer: either a mention of the merchandise in which the customer is interested (*Do you have sabritas?*) or occasionally an explanation of why the customer is at the door ("Quiero comprar" – *I want to buy*).

V.2 Notifications: Household-Member Gets Vendor's Attention:

The home stores examined here are considered to be the property and responsibility of the mother, as discussed in Chapter 1. If she is not in the immediate vicinity of the store, other family members typically relay the news of a customer rather than taking care of the transaction themselves.

Table 3.5 Notification of Customer's Arrival

BY ADULT	2
BY CHILD	9 *
TOTAL	11
* Includes two instances of notification by children who are visiting the family.	

The task of notifying Mother is often assumed by children, even when not explicitly asked to do so: of the eleven instances of notification, seven were performed by a vendor's children of the vendor, and two more were performed by young cousins who were visiting the house on a play-date. These instances of spontaneous notification indicate that, as children play, they are also paying close attention to adult activities – and to unexpected visitors. The illustration below is captured from the beginning of a video-recorded store transaction: the two daughters (nine months and two years of age respectively) have gravitated toward a new customer even before the latter had a chance to announce her presence:

Example 3.8:

This incident, as well as the significance of children's attentive observation of store routines even when they do not productively participate, is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Verbal notification is simple and can be done without interrupting other activities, as in the example below where a brother and sister pause only briefly to get Mother's attention before going back to their game:

Example 3.9:

GIRL (3 yrs) and BOY (4 yrs) are in the living room pretending to be birds. The Vendor (Mother) is in the kitchen.

1	((knocking))	CUS gets VEN's Attn
2	((BOY hands GIRL a card from a game))	
3	GIR (pushing away the card): Otro no! *Not another*!	Ongoing Play
4	GIRL: Ahorita [me voy a volar. *Now* [*I'm going to fly.*	
5	VEN: [Voy! [*Coming!*	VEN responds to CUS
6	((BOY pushes GIRL away.))	
7	BOY: Piyopiyopiyo! *Tweet tweet tweet!*	
8	((GIRL runs away, flapping her arms))	
9	GIRL: Piyopiyopiyopiyo! *Tweet tweet tweet tweet*!	

10 BOY:	Quieren comprar! *They want to buy!*	CHILD notifies VEN
11 VEN:	Voy hijo! *Coming, son!*	VEN responds to notification

In this example, the boy's notification is not necessary as Mother has already (line 5) responded to the knock at the door by shouting out "Voy!" (*I'm coming!*) on line 5. After her son's notification (line 10), she repeats her confirmation (line 11) this time as an acknowledgement to him.

In a few instances, the vendor will call back to the customer (or to the child), but usually she heads straight to the store. Shouted responses are more common for cases where a member of the family relays the notification (5 out of 9 times versus 12 out of 51), suggesting that the response may be an acknowledgment to the family member rather than the customer.

V.3 Greetings:

Verbal greetings were not typically a part of the commercial interaction: only seven transactions in this corpus had any sort of greeting. Four of these "greetings" simply consisted of the vendor inviting the customer into the store area to more closely examine the merchandise, two involved the vendor greeting adult customers and the final one was a greeting by a child customer. None were reciprocated. Typically, there is no greeting and the customer launches straight into the business at hand as soon as she is acknowledged by the vendor: either by requesting an item or asking questions about the store inventory. Each of the three greetings will be examined individually in the sections that follow. In the table below I also include the five instances in which vendors sought to gain the attention of a loitering child customer, as these cases could be interpreted as substitutes for greetings.

Table 3.6: Greetings and Invitations

PARTICIPANTS	TYPE OF INTERACTION	TOT	DEMOGRAPHICS
CUSTOMER ONLY	Greeting	1	Vendor = Mother; Customers = Teen & Child
VENDOR ONLY	Greeting	2	1 Vendor = Mother; Customer = Adult 1 Vendor = Mother; NonCustomer = Adult
	Invitation	4	1x Vendors = Mother; Customer = Adult 3x Vendor = Mother; Customer = Child.
	Soliciting request for merchandise	5*	2x Vendor = Adult; Customer = Child 2x Vendor = Mother; Customer = Child 1x Vendor = Mother; Customer = Unknown
TOTAL GREETINGS		12	
NO GREETING		59	
TOTAL		71**	

* These are the same instances listed under "Vendor gets Customer's Attention" in Table 3.4.

** Including 1 *tanda* payment which was not a store transaction but was a commercial interaction.

Although Traverso (2001) notes the "obligatory opening and closing sequences" of vendor/customer exchanges, the San Cristobal transactions can and do begin without any preamble sequence and often end with the customer departing as soon as the money and merchandise change hands. Lack of overt markers of social politeness can itself be a form of respect for the interlocutor, showing value for his or her time and privacy (Bailey 1997). Additionally, Goffman (1971) argues that the elaborateness of a greeting is inversely proportional to the ease and frequency of interaction between the two individuals, which suggests that one should expect daily purchases from neighbors to be accompanied by minimal greetings. While the contextual use or absence of greetings varies cross-culturally, the lack of *verbal* greetings in these commercial transactions is significant precisely because it contrasts markedly with San Cristobal social life, in which such verbal acknowledgements are a necessary component of everyday interactions, whether they be social visits or passing a neighbor on the street, and regardless of whether the individual is local or an infrequent visitor. In this regard, the situation is different from Bailey's 1997 analysis, which frames the apparent terseness of

Korean-American storekeepers (and their reluctance to convert service transactions into social encounters) within larger cultural models of restraint politeness in which respect is shown to non-intimates through the avoidance of imposition.

The following transcript of a social visit which occurred during one of my store observations sessions, illustrates the distinction between social and commercial behavior:

Example 3.11:

Grandmother has been sitting in a chair watching TV while her grandson plays by the sofa and Alicia (Researcher) films him. A *comadre* (specifically, the boy's godmother) arrives and Grandmother stands up to greet her.

GMA: Adelante adelante.
Come in, come in!
((COMADRE opens gate and enters past the store.))

COM: Como está? *How are you[formal]?* ((COMADRE walks across the room toward GRANDMA)) GMA: Bien y [tú? *Well, and* [*you[informal]?* COM: [*Ahaha!* [*Hahaha!* ((COMADRE reaches GRANDMA and kisses her on the cheek)) COM: (Bueno en todo) (*Well, overall.)* GMA: E[s:o. *Th*[*ere.*	COMADRES exchanges greetings with GRANDMA
COM (to ALI): [Buenas tardes. [*Good afternoon.* ((GRANDMA turns away, walks back toward her chair.)) ALI: Buenas [tardes. *Good* [*afternoon.*	COMADRE exchanges greetings with RESEARCHER
((COM bends down, facing BOY)): [Hola! [*Hello*! BOY: Hola. *Hello.* COM: Como estÁS? *How ARE you?* ((GRANDMA sits down, watching them.)) BOY: BiEN. *Goood.*	COMADRE exchanges greetings with BOY

GMA: Di buenas [tardes [hijito! *Say good* [*afternoon*, [*kiddo*. ((COMADRE approaches BOY))	Adults
COM: [Guapo! [Salúdame pues! [*Handsome*! [*Greet me then*!	prompt BOY
GMA: Saluda tu madrina. *Greet your godmother*.	
BOY: Hola ((kissing COMADRE)). *Hello*!	BOY re-greets greets COMADRE

Upon entering, the visitor individually greets every individual in the room, including the researcher (myself), who is a complete stranger to her. Greeting all present individuals,[36] regardless of one's relationship to them or their status in the household, is a standard formality. Even though the visitor's verbal greeting to me is quickly glossed over (she turns away to greet her godson even as I am answering her), the act of saying and responding "Buenas tardes" (Good afternoon) is a necessary acknowledgement of each other as social individuals (Duranti 1997) – which is why the absence of such greetings in store transactions is particularly noteworthy.

The visitor's greeting to her godson is more extended than either of the adult greetings, and is an opportunity to both show affection and socialize him into the proper way to greet a relative. Even though the boy has already said hello, and responded appropriately to her "Como estás?" (*How are you?),* both women continue to prompt him to greet (*saludar*) his *madrina*. The acceptable *saludo* which he ultimately performs consists of both a verbal statement and a kiss on the cheek.

Greeting 1: Vendor Greets an Adult Customer:

One of the two instances of a vendor greeting a customer occurs with an adult customer:

[36] Or at least all present adults.

Example 3.12: Adult customer; Mother is the vendor.

VEN: Qué desean? *What would you[pl] like?*	VEN Initiates Transaction
VEN: ((nervous laughter)) VEN: Buenas tardes. *Good afternoon.*	Belated Greeting
CUS: Tiene algunas pastillas para la gripa? *Do you[formal] have any pills for a cold?*	Preface Question

The mother enters the store with a typical response to a customer's knock: "Qué desean?" (What would you like?) The use of the plural *you* suggests that she has not yet seen who is at the door.[37] Upon recognizing the customer, she gives a nervous laugh and fills in the missing greeting. The customer does not respond to the greeting but uses the formal *you* conjugation in her request, confirming the slightly more formal relationship.

An analysis of the choice of *tú* versus *Usted* (informal and formal second person pronouns) is a tricky one and my observations suggest it is not consistent across generations. Adults in their forties and above tend toward the use of *Usted* to codify formal relationship with neighbors, in-laws or *compadres* (see Chapter 5, Section V on social networks for a more detailed examination of *compadrazgo*). While *Usted* indicates respect, it does not preclude intimacy: in a relationships of unequal status, such as that between a mother- and daughter-in-law, the latter may retain the use of *Usted* over decades even if the two women become good friends (see also Brown and Gilman 1960). This same generation was also taught to address their parents as *Usted* a practice which has fallen out of fashion among the current generation of young parents, who are building a more egalitarian relationship with their children. Youth and

[37] Since Mexican Spanish uses the same verb conjugation for both the formal and informal second person plural, pluralizing "you" also allows the speaker sidestep the question of whether the unknown addressee requires the informal *tú* or the formal *Usted* conjugation.

young adults in their twenties also default toward the informal pronoun when addressing strangers of their own generation, especially in a social (rather than business) context.

Greeting 2: Vendor Greets a *Tanda* Participant:

The second instance in which a vendor greeted an arrival was a commercial context but not a store transaction: a neighbor had come in to discuss the money he owed for an ongoing *tanda* run by the vendor. A *tanda* is a form of rotating credit association in which participants agree to pay a fixed regular (weekly or monthly) sum to an organizer, who distributes each week's collected funds to a single member in a predetermined order.[38] Once every member has received their allotted payment, the *tanda* disbands, although the same individual may be known for running regular *tandas* with the same core group of participants.

Example 3.13: Adult customer. Mother is the vendor.

VEN: Buenas ta:rdes. *Good afternoon.*	Greeting
VEN: Bueno? *Yes?*	VEN Solicits Request

CUS: Este (?) la tanda [cuántos hace falta?[39]
Um (?) the tanda [how many [weeks] short am I?
VEN: [Bueno.
[Yes.
VEN: Con éstes que me den? Faltan dos.
With these you've[pl] given me? [You're] two short.

Since a *tanda* depends on all members paying their dues promptly over the course of several months, participants must be known by the organizer to be trustworthy and prompt. The

[38] Rotating credit groups depend on the trust and reputation of participants. Often, the payouts are scheduled in such a way that the oldest and most trusted members receive their money first, with the newest members being last. This minimizes the risk of one individual's defaulting on later payments after already having received the benefits of their participation (Cope and Kurtz 1980).

[39] Both the vendor and the customer use the verb *faltar* (to be missing/lacking) without a subject. Literally, the customer asks "[In] the *tanda,* how many are lacking?" and the vendor responds "Two are lacking." I use the English colloquialism *to be short [some amount]* to make the content more comprehensible while retaining some of the indirectness present in the use of the third person *falta* instead of the first person *debo* ("I owe").

organizer, in turn, must be known by participants and trusted to handle the money responsibly. The vendor's greeting in this case likely indexes the visitor's status as a known and trusted neighbor rather than the commercial relationship between the two.

This particular *tanda* was sponsored by a linen store and the payout for each member was a comforter worth 500 pesos (about US$50). The organizer explained to me that if she carried a ten person (and therefore ten week) *tanda* to completion, the company would give her an eleventh comforter for free. As it turns out, one member did default and only nine comforters were purchased, but the store kept its end of the bargain anyway (Doña A, personal communication).

Greeting 3: Customer Greeting Vendor:

The sole example of a customer's greeting in the course of a store transaction occurred with two customers (here labeled Teen Girl and Younger Girl):

Example 3.14:

VEN: Pásale. Invitation
Come in.

VEN: Si?
Yes?

TG: ((incomprehensible))

TG: Buenas tardes. Greeting
Good afternoon.

((VENDOR opens the gate for the girls to enter.))

YG: Quiero chicharrín con -
I want chicharrín with - Request

VEN: - Con salsa?
- *With salsa?*

In this exchange it is not clear who the older teen is greeting. She may be talking to the vendor or she may be talking to the researcher (myself), as I am standing nearby recording the interaction.[40]

I will return to the distinction between social interactions and commercial ones in the section on closings. Like greetings, closings are often omitted or minimized in transactions but serve as a salient feature of social encounters.[41]

Invitations to Enter:

In addition to the greetings discussed above, in four additional cases the vendor opens the exchange by inviting the customer into the store, a statement which might be seen to substitute for a greeting, as in the example below:

Example 3.15:

VEN: Pásale. *Enter.*	VEN invites CUS into store.
CUS: Quiero una pale:ta. *I want a lollipop.*	Request

All four of these invitations occurred in the same *abarrotes*. This was the largest store in the study and was set up in such a way that child customers were not always able to see all the merchandise from the doorway.

[40] I took care to remain in the background and was generally ignored by customers while recording. However, as an adult within the domestic space I was always greeted by visitors who entered the house. This contrast between two different behavioral expectations is especially striking: on the one hand, it is standard to greet all visible adults when entering a home (whether they live there or not and whether one knows them or not) while on the other hand it is standard to omit greetings when purchasing from a home store, regardless of how well one knows the vendor.

[41] Among Spanish-speakers in San Cristobal it is common to greet a passer-by on the street with the closing of "Adios" (*Goodbye*), a practice which has also been noted in Michoacán (Foster 1964) and in peninsular Spain (Foster 1964, Pinto 2008).

V.4 The Act of Buying Merchandise (Request and Prefaces):

The core of the commercial transaction consists of requesting and then paying for a piece of merchandise. Customers will either directly request a specific item or preface their request with a question or statement regarding the item (such as whether it is available). Common prefacing statements include: asking whether the vendor has the item in question, asking about prices, or announcing one's intention to buy. The last of these is used exclusively by young children and will be examined in further detail below. When the primary customer is a young child accompanied by an older companion, prefaces also include question-prompts intended to get the younger child to communicate his or her desires. By means of this sort of scaffolding, adults and older children position a very small child as a primary participant who is expected to make her own request for merchandise. Scaffolding of young children is examined in greater detail in Chapter 4, Section III, and therefore will be only briefly covered here.

V.5 Prefaces to Requests:

Prefaces consisted of any sort of question about the store merchandise which preceded a direct request to purchase either that item or a similar one. Common preface questions addressed the availability of an item, its package size, flavor, or its price. Other forms of prefacing included the announcement "Quiero comprar" (*I want to buy*), or cases where an older customer used questions to prompt a small child to request a snack. Table 3.7 breaks down the different methods used to lead into requests as well as whether the item was available.

Table 3.7: Merchandise Requests

	REQUEST TYPE (& item availability)								
	PREFACED REQUEST			DIRECT REQUEST		SCAFFOLD	UNKNOWN		
	Avail	Not Avail	Limited *	Avail.	Not Avail	Avail.	Avail	Not Avail	Unknown
CHILD	11	3	2	16	3	2	4	0	3
	TOT: 16			TOT: 19			TOT: 7		
ADULT	3	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	1
	TOT: 7			TOT: 5			TOT: 5		
OTHER	1: unknown	1: teen+ child	/	3: teen+child teen unknown	1: unknown	2: adult+child teen+child	/	/	/
	TOT: 2			TOT: 4			TOT: 0		
TOTAL	15	5	4	22	6		6	2	4
	TOT: 25			TOT: 28		TOT: 5	TOT: 12		
* Vendor only had certain sizes/flavors of the item available.									

Customers begin interactions with a preface in 30 instances - over 40% of total transactions, and approximately half of those transactions in which a preface or its absence was detectable.[42] Children tend toward omitting the preface and jumping straight into a direct request for an item (19 direct versus 16 prefaced requests) whereas adults customers are relatively more likely to use a preface (7 prefaces versus 5 direct requests) although the smaller numbers of adult transactions make these distinctions relatively minor.

Prefacing questions are known to have social as well as practical significance (Brown and Levinson 1978). Introducing the topic of the transaction through a request for information rather than a request for merchandise can be seen as either an indicator of uncertainty (Lakoff 1973) or as a marker of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978). Preface questions may indicate the customer's lack of knowledge or certainty about the store's inventory and the need for more

[42] In 12 of the cases I was unable to hear the customer's initial comment, often due to lively children or other background noise.

information before making a decision. They may also serve as a way of easing into the topic of the visit, without beginning the interaction with a demand for goods.

The fact that children preface their requests less often than adults does not mean that they are less socially skilled. Instead this may indicate that these children are more familiar with the contents of that store, or are requesting items which they know from past experience to be typically available in such stores. As noted previously, children formed the majority of customers, with 65% of transactions performed by children. This number expands to 68% if one includes children accompanied by adults or adolescents. Over two thirds (71%) of these child customers were buying snacks or candy. Adult purchases tended to be more evenly distributed between snacks and grocery items (the adult transactions included 6 snacks, 7 groceries, 1 medicine and 5 unknown).

In this sample prefaces in children's requests correlated with a lower chance of being successfully fulfilled (13 successes, 3 failures) than did non-prefaced requests (16 successes, 3 failures) although in both cases the majority of requests were successful. In contrast, adult requests with prefaces were slightly more likely to be successful (5 successes, 2 failures) than were direct request (3 successes, 2 failures). This observation suggests that children may be using preface questions for practical reasons, namely in order to gain information in cases where an item is less commonly available or they are less familiar with it. Adults, on the other hand, may use prefaces for other reasons not related to item availability.. It may also be the case that adults' choice of prefaces versus direct requests *does* reflect their belief about the item's being available but that adults have less accurate knowledge about the store's typical stock and therefore their assumptions about the item they want are less likely to correlate with the reality of

the store's inventory. Below I will examine the different forms of prefaces and their significance to the customer-vendor relationships.

Asking About Merchandise or Prices is by far the most common preface question, and serves to introduce the item which the customer plans to request, as in the example below:

Example 3.16: Child Customer; Mother is the vendor.

CUS:	A cuánto cuesta los sabritas? *How much are the chips?*	Preface Question
VEN:	A cinco. *Five [pesos].*	Response
CUS:	Me (dé)[43] uno. *Can you [formal] give me one.*	Request for Merchandise

Here the child customer uses a question about the price of chips to segue into a request for them. Prefacing a request with a question about the item can suggest potential problems with the impending transactions, such as an item not being available, being available only in an undesirable flavor or size, or being more expensive than anticipated[44]. Here we can compare two child customers who have requested unavailable merchandise: the first customer uses a direct request while second uses a prefacing question. The vendor's response is the same in both cases. Across the data set there was no significant difference in vendor responses for male and female vendors or between mothers (who are the store owners) and other adults in the household.

[43] *Me dé* is a more polite form of *déme* (give me), as well as using the formal second person conjugation.

[44] There were no indications in this data set of a customer deciding *not* to purchase an item because of its price, however it is not possible to determine whether knowing the price changed a customer's overall purchasing decisions, for instance deciding not to request a second snack if the first one proved more expensive than anticipated.

Example 3.17: Direct Request
(Child customer; Father is the vendor)

CUS: Quiero una pale:ta. *I want a lollipop.*	Direct Request
VEN: Paleta? *Lollipop?*	
VEN: No tengo paleta. I don't have lollipops.	Rejection
CUS: Es - no? *Um – no?*	
VEN: No hay paleta. *There's no lollipops.*	

Example 3.18: Preface Question Preceding a (Potential) Request
(Child customer, Mother is the vendor)

CUS: Tienes pañal? *Do you have [a] diaper?*	Preface to Request
VEN: No tengo paña:les. *I don't have di:apers.*	Rejection

While a prefacing question displays a level of uncertainty that may perhaps make a rejection less unexpected to the customer (Brown and Levinson 1978), its presence or absence does not affect the form of the vendor's response.

Quiero comprar (Not Quite a Preface):

One form of merchandise request used exclusively by children is the statement "Quiero comprar" (*I want to buy*) preceding a direct request. While identical in form to the "Quier(o/en) comprar!" (*I/They want to buy!*) attention-getting announcements discussed earlier in this chapter, in this case the declaration of wanting to buy happens directly before the request, without giving the vendor time to respond (and therefore is not classified as a pre-request in Table 3.7 above).

Example 3.20: Child customer, father is the vendor.

VEN: Si?
Yes?

CUS: Quiero comprar, *I want to buy,*	Statement of Intent
me da un chicharrín. *can you give me a chicharrín.*	Request
VEN: Chicharrín? No tengo, m'ijo. *Chicharrín? I don't have any, son.*	Refusal

Like the question prefaces, beginning one's request with "Quiero comprar" may be a way for the customer to segue into the actual purpose of the visit without the abruptness of presenting a demand for merchandise as soon the vendor arrives. But as discussed at the beginning of this section, there were a sizeable number of transactions without any such prefaces (41% of child-customer transactions and 31% of adult-customer transactions), suggesting that, for many customers, such abruptness is neither awkward nor inappropriate.

Prefaces as Scaffolds:

The final use of prefaces during transactions is in the form of *scaffolding* of a small child by an adult or older child (or, in some cases, by the vendor). Such scaffolding will be discussed in greater detail in the second section of Chapter 4 on children's expertise and socialization. Here I will only briefly touch upon its use as another way of leading into a request for merchandise: in this case the scaffolding questions are designed to elicit a direct request from a small child. In the first example, the elicitation comes from the child's older peer:

Example 3.21:
Two child customers (Older Child and Younger Child); Mother is the vendor.

VEN: Qué?
What?

OC: Este. Qué quieres, Anita? *Um. What do you want, Anita?*	Preface Question: OLDER CUS to CHILD

YC: Eh.

Here, the older child expands the vendor's prompt, turning it into an explicit question directed at little Anita. In the following example, the child's mother attempts to elicit a request from her son, while the vendor and her own (slightly older) son joke about the lack of merchandise:

Example 3.22:

MOM: Ahora qué quieres papito?[45] *Now what do you want, kiddo?*	Preface Q: CUS to CHILD

((3 second pause))

VEN: No hay nada. *There's nothing.*	Potential Response to Preface Q

VEN'S SON: No hay nada?
There's nothing?
VEN: No hay NADA.
There's NOTHING.
((laughter))
VEN: No hay nada dice también Alex.
Alex [Ven's son] says there's nothing too.

After a long pause during which the child looks around, but does not answer, the vendor provides a possible joke response which would explain the child's inability to come to a decision: the fact that he sees nothing worth requesting. The vendor's son picks up her statement and repeats it as a question, which the vendor reframes as a confirmation of her own assessment. Both the vendor and the child's mother prompt him to make a choice among the existing selection of snacks.

Preface Questions as a Strategy for Avoiding Problems:

In some cases, negotiation about the item may occur *after* the request rather than before, suggesting that preface questions can be incorporated into a larger category of "Questions about Merchandise." Is it then useful to categorize preface remarks as a separate element apart from the

[45] A term of endearment used for small boys.

request itself? I choose to construct prefaces as a separate transaction component for a number of reasons. Firstly, the majority of customers placed questions *prior* to requests, suggesting that this is a more comfortable order of events for participants. Additionally, as discussed earlier, preface questions (as well as preface statements such as "quiero comprar") provide a way for customers to segue into the purpose of their visit. Thirdly, by asking about an item rather than asking *for* the item, the speaker is indicating the possibility of her request being problematic, for instance the item not being available or being more expensive than anticipated. Finally, by asking for information *before* asking for the item, the customer is allowing himself the option of changing his request if he does not like the answer to his questions. These last two functions of preface statements are worth discussing in further detail.

Item Availability: As mentioned previously, there is a correlation between child customers' use of a preface question and the frequency of their request being unsuccessful. When their first request is rejected, customers typically preface their alternative request with "Do you have...?" or "How much...?" rather than simply demanding another item, as in the following instance:

Example 3.23:
Child customer; Father is the vendor (assisted by Mother).

CUS: Tiene canela?	
Do you have cinnamon?	
MOM (from the living room): No.	Failed
No.	Request
VEN: Nno.	
No.	

CUS: No?
No?
Son (from the living room): Nno.
Nno.

CUS: A cuánto cuesta el papel?	Preface to
How much is the [toilet] paper?	Second Request

VEN: Siete pesos.
Seven pesos.

CUS: Y suelto?
And per roll?
VEN: A dos pesos el rollo?
Two pesos a roll?

CUS: Me da uno. *I'll take one.*	Second Request

In the following example, this customer knows for a fact that the item is available, since her friend Luz already bought one. Even though she is unable to describe the item, she asks for it directly and without preamble:

Example 3.24:
Child customer, mother is the vendor.

CUS: Me da (un ?? que se llevo la Luz) *Can I have a (?) like the one (Luz) got?*	Request

VEN: De cual?
Which kind?
CUS: La Luz.
Luz.
VEN (takes a chicharrín): Éste?
This one?

CUS: La que la llevó la Luz. *The one Luz got.*	Clarification of Request

VEN: No sé cual es. Éste, parece.
I don't know which one it is. This one, looks like.

Changing one's Request: Asking before requesting gives the customer the option of either not requesting the item at all or adjusting his request (e.g. asking for one cookie rather than two if the price is higher than expected), although there were no instances in these data of a customer refusing to purchase specifically based on price. In a few cases, however, small children asked about several different prices before deciding which options to select, suggesting the issue was not *whether* to buy a snack but *which* snack to buy with their limited resources.

Observations of child customers in another context, that of a San Cristobal school snack stand, suggest that young children's economic strategizing is often based around maximizing the purchases they can make with a given amount of money rather than minimizing their costs.

Elementary school children came to the counter with payment in hand; when offered change they tended to look around for small-price item to use up the extra coins, such as gum or a lollipop.[46] This is a direct contrast to the adolescents observed at a high-school lunch counter, who chose their items and receive their change. Adolescents were also more likely to pay in larger denomination bills (e.g. a 20 peso bill; or approximately US$2), meaning that the received change was more than could be reasonably spent on a single candy.

Reasons for this distinction between child and adult/adolescent purchasing strategies are beyond the scope of my study, but I would hypothesize that both the amount of money and its source are important factors. Small children are given small coins while adolescents pay with bills, thus the amount of change that children receive from a purchase is very small and likely to only amount to a single candy's worth, compared to the larger value of change received from adolescents' purchases. Additionally, if children's spending money is given to them by parents when needed for a specific purchase, then the child might not perceive a connection between a peso which is saved today and a peso which can be spent to buy something else tomorrow. Adolescents, on the other hand, are handling larger amounts of money (it is not uncommon for them to pay with 50 or 100 peso bills – approximately US$5 and $10 – rather than single peso coins) have a more sophisticated knowledge of parental household expenses, and may even be spending money which they earned on their own.

V.6. Unsuccessful Purchase Attempts:

Transactions do not always go smoothly – sometimes the vendor does not have the required item or has it but in the wrong flavor. In these cases a vendor may simply say she does

[46] In some cases this buying strategy may be facilitated by adults. Jena Barchas-Lichtenstein (personal communication) observed Oaxacan vendors often offering additional merchandise to (adult) customers in lieu of change. I did not witness this practice in San Cristobal, but did find that most small-business vendors preferred exact payment and breaking even a 50 peso bills (US$5) bill could be difficult.

not have the item, or she may suggest an alternative, and most of these alternatives ended up being accepted by customers. Customers who came to buy snacks would generally ask for another item if their first request proved unsuccessful, however customers who had come in to buy groceries or necessities would generally terminate the interaction upon learning the desired item was not available, as in the following instance.

Example 3.25:
Child Customer; Mother is vendor.

VEN (to customer): Si?
Yes?
CUS: Tienes un pañal?
Do you have a diaper?
VEN: No tengo paña:les.
I don't have dia:pers.

((Customer leaves. Vendor goes back inside.))

As will be discussed in the section on closings, leaving without acknowledgement is fairly common and not considered rude.

V.7 Requests for Merchandise:

As discussed above, some customers begin the transaction with one or more prefacing questions, while others go straight to the merchandise request. In the latter case, the request occurs as soon as the vendor arrives in the store, as in the example below (which will be analyzed in more detail in Chapter 4):

Example 3.26:
Child customer; mother is the vendor.

VEN ((as she is halfway to the door)): Qué? *What?*	VEN Initiates Interaction
((VENDOR walks over, carrying Baby.))	VEN Enters Store Space
CUS: Una ... una luz que enciende? *A .... a light that turns on?* *[referring to a light-up candy.]*	Request

The actual structure of the request may vary in degree of formality, although the data are not robust enough to examine differing frequencies in grammatical structures used by child versus adult customers. Some examples of grammatical constructions used include:

Dame [X].	*Give me [X].*
Me da [X].	*Could you[formal] give me [X]?*
Quiero [X].	*I want [X].*

....or simply stating the name of the item, as in the previous example.

Although *me da* would be considered a more polite request than *dame,* there was no evidence of vendors' responding differently based on the modality of the request. While detailed analysis of the different nuances of these forms and the characteristics of the customers (e.g. the difference between child and adult requests) is outside the scope of this study, I mention them here as yet another reminder that the lack of greeting or indirectness are not in and of themselves indicators of lack of politeness.

Problems: Premature Requests:

In approximately 28 instances, the customer jumped straight into requesting merchandise as soon as the vendor arrived in the store space, without intro or preamble. As discussed previously, such requests are not seen to be problematic:

Example 3.27:
Adult customer, Mother is the vendor.

((Vendor enters from kitchen, laughing.))	VEN Enters Store Space
CUS: Dame una Fan(hh)ta (?) *Give me a Fan(h)ta (??)*	Request

VEN: Una Fanta?
A Fanta?
CUS: Sí.
Yeah.

In a few cases customers presented their request even before it was practical to do so. In the transaction discussed earlier in this chapter (Example 3.7), a customer shouted his request into an empty store and was forced to repeat it once the vendor had actually arrived:

Example 3.28:
Adult customer; mother is the vendor.
Vendor is watching TV in the living room.

CUS: ((incomprehensible shouting from outside))

CUS: Tiene Coca?! *Do you have Coke?!*	CUS gets VEN's Attention / Request

((knocking on door))
VEN: Coca dice?
Did he say Coke?

In another transaction, an adult customer attempted to gain the attention of a toddler in order to make her purchase rather than summoning an adult into the store:

Example 3.29:
Two year old Petra is playing on the floor in front of the merchandise display, when an adult customer arrives.

CUS: Quiero dos cajetitas.[47] *I want two [little] caramels.*	Request (to child)

((PETRA looks up at Customer's arrival))
((PETRA looks down, then looks at Researcher, who is across the room))
CUS: Dos cajetas quiero.
Two caramels I want.
CUS: Quiero dos cajetas mamita.
I want two caramels, dear.
(CUSTOMER leans on the gate, sees ALICIA))
CUS: Eheh, buenas tardes.
Hehe, good afternoon.
ALI: Buenas tardes.
Good afternoon.

CUS: Quiero dos. *I want two.*	Request (to adult)

ALI: Ahorita viene.
[She'll] be right there.

[47] The customer's use of diminutives in *cajetita* ("little caramel") and *mamita* (a term of endearment used for small girls – see also *papito* in the next footnote), indicate that she is specifically trying to get the child's attention.

Upon seeing me in the room, the customer shows some embarrassment and greets me, thereby setting up a social interaction, but then attempts to re-enter the transaction framework by repeating her request, this time to a (hopefully) attentive adult. Not being familiar with or having authority over the merchandise, I reassure the customer that the vendor will arrive soon.

V.8 Exchange of Payment and Item:

The transaction itself was often quite rapid and not verbally marked. Customers generally had the payment in hand already and the coin and snack were exchange simultaneously, and with no verbal component, as in this video-recorded transaction with a child customer:

Example 3.30:
Child customer; Mother is the vendor.

CUS: Ah, me da dos – dos de estos (??)
Ah, give me two – two of those (??)
VEN: Éste?
This?
CUS: Sí. Dos.
Yes, two.
((VEN hands candy, takes money))

The rapidity of these transactions is facilitated by customers' familiarity with store merchandise and prices and by the vendor's treatment of the exchange as a momentary task rather than a structured social interaction.

Receiving Change:

After the exchange, the vendor turns away to retrieve the customer's change, which usually consists of only one or two coins. The customer receives the change and both parties turn away without further preamble. Closings, and the unmarkedness of closing-less endings, are the topic of the next section.

V.9 Closings:

Oftentimes, the exchange of merchandise and money marks the end of the interaction and the two parties turn away without further comment. As has been discussed above in reference to greetings, a lack of verbal closing may indicate an expectation that this transaction is part of an ongoing interaction, and that the customer will return later in the day when he or she wants another candy. Table 3.8 presents the different methods used to end a transaction.

Table 3.8: Closings and Partings

	YES		NO		INDETERMINATE	
CUSTOMER	Thanking	Good bye	Transaction Completion Marker Only	None	SOCIAL (or segue into conversation)	Unknown/ Problematic
ADULT	6 3 CO * *	1	1 VO	0	2	5 *
CHILD	7		4 2 CO 3 VO	19	3	7
TEEN	1					
MULTIPLE CATEG.	1 teen+ch			1 teen+ch		1 teen+child
UNKNOWN	1			1		1
TOTAL	19	1	10	21	5	14
*s denote the three transactions in which the vendor was a child.						

Child-customer interactions ended without any closing two thirds of the time (19 instances without any closing, plus nine instances with only a transaction-completion-marker, compared to seven instances of actual closings). In contrast, most of the adult-customer interactions did have some sort of closing, generally an exchange of thank-yous. An examination of video-recorded transactions indicates that ending without a closing was a mutual decision, and that neither the child customer nor vendor expected any parting words:

Example 3.31

Vendor receives money. *Customer receives candy.* *Both turn away.*

In the example illustrated above, both the customer and vendor turn away simultaneously as the interaction ends. If payment was in exact change, the transaction is considered complete once the customer receives his merchandise and the vendor receives her payment. The customer would walk off with her purchase while the vendor turned away to put the money in the cash box. In these cases, the vendor rarely turns back to re-engage with or check on the customer. In cases where the customer is owed change, she would wait for the vendor to re-engage and deliver the coins, after which point both would turn away.

In a few instances a lack of verbal prompting regarding change proved problematic for young child customers: when the vendor turned toward the cash box, the customer would leave the store area with her purchase. The vendor was then forced to call the child back into the store to retrieve his change.

The lack of a formal closing does not necessarily indicate that the interaction itself is minimal or impersonal. In the example below, the customer, an adolescent boy, is quite chatty and jokes with the vendor but leaves without any sort of postscript to the transaction exchange.

Example 3.32: Adolescent customers; Mother is the vendor.

CUS1: Me das (uno de estos). *Can you[informal] give me (one of those).* ((CUS1 points))	Request
VEN: De cual? *One of which?* CUS1: (incomprehensible) ((VENDOR laughingly slaps CUS1's arm lightly)) VEN: De cual? De éste? *One of which? Of these?* CUS1: No de ese pero (?) *No of those but (?)* VEN: De ?? éste? Con salsa? *Of (?) these? With salsa?* CUS1: Sí, con mucho, con mucho sii::. *Yes a lot, a lot yee::s.* VEN: Bueno. *Okay.* CUS1: Whoowhoo. *Whoowhoo.* ((CUS2 laughs)) ((CUS1 gestures at CUS2 who leans in to see the camera))	
((VEN hands the chicharrín to CUS1, who gives her the money.))	Exchange
CUS2: (incomprehensible)	
VEN: Solo? *That's it?*	Closing: Transaction Completion Marker
((The two boys laugh and joke while VEN gets the change)) ((CUS1 makes a V-sign for the camera, then steps back as VEN hands him change.))	
CUS2: A ver: me das un jugo. *Let's see, can you[informal] give me a juice.* VEN: Jugo de qué sabor? *What flavor juice?* CUS2: Qué sea. *Whichever.*	Request
((CUS2 gives VEN the money)) ((VEN hands him a yellow juice.))	Exchange
((The two boys leave and VEN goes back inside.))	Ending

While it is unclear how much of the customer's joking around is intended for the vendor herself, for his companion, or for the video camera (which he notices partway through the transaction) his interactions with the vendor make clear that they are both on familiar terms,

through his joking stance and through both boys' use of the informal second-person conjugation (*me das* rather than *me da*) when requesting their snacks. Leaving without a closing is an unmarked move, not to be considered as either rude or rushed.

Non-Reciprocated Closings:

Closings may also be performed by one party without receiving a verbal response. One-part closings were relatively rare, although transaction completion markers (to be discussed in greater detail below) often tended to be only used by one individual.[48]

Types of Closings:

An outline of the most common types of closings are below along with their frequency in the data set. Unless otherwise noted, two-part examples are given.

1. *Thanking* was the most common two-part closing, occurring in 16 transactions (plus three non-reciprocal cases of the customer saying "gracias" without recieving a response).

Example 3.33: Child customer; Mother is the vendor.

Vendor has just returned from the kitchen, checking to see if she still has *chicharrín* (a fried flour snack).

VEN: No hay chicharrín.
There's no chicharrín.

CUS: Eh, gracias!
Eh, thanks!

((Customer runs off.))

VEN: De nada.
You're welcome.

In this case, the purchase attempt was not successful, but the customer thanks the vendor for taking the time to check her inventory. In the example below, the customer thanks the vendor after completing a purchase.

[48] Because of the small number of adult transactions in this data set, it is difficult to ascertain if the frequency of one-part closings differs for children and adults.

Example 3.34: Child customer; mother is the vendor.

CUS: Me das uno (??) stik-stiks?
Could you give me a (?) Stik-stik?
VEN: A peso.
One peso.
((Vendor hands candy, receives money))
CUS: Gracias.
Thanks.
VEN: De nada.
You're welcome.
((Vendor puts coin back in box, leaves store area.))

There were also three cases of customers thanking vendors without receiving a response; but not being reciprocated; two of these involved a child vendor (and were audio-recorded) so there may have been a nonverbal response on the part of the vendor.

2. *Verbalized Goodbyes* are not typically used to close commercial transactions although, like verbalized greetings, are common in social interactions. The following excerpt illustrates a customer who uses separate partings to index her social and commercial relationships with different participants. First the customer says thank you to the vendor for checking whether she had Fanta (this closes the commercial interaction). The customer then says an affectionate goodbye to the vendor's little daughter, who she has been clowning with and making faces at while waiting for the vendor's return (thereby closing the social interaction).

Example 3.35:

VEN: Solo hay de uva y fría.
There's only grape and it's cold.
((Daughter runs from Mom back to the kids))

CUS: Gracias. *Thanks.*	Commercial Closing
CUS (holding her hand out to Daughter): [Adió:s! [*Goodbye:e*!	Social Closing

VEN: [De nada.
[*You're welcome.*
((Customers leave, Daughter runs back, laughing.))

3. *Hedges or Transaction-Completion Markers* consisted of minimal acknowledgements that the interaction is over, such as "ya" (*done*), "bueno" (*okay*) or "solo" (*that's all*). They were used to create reciprocal closings but were also used non-reciprocally by both vendors and customers, as illustrated below. All three instances involve child customers, while the store owner is the vendor.

Example 3.36: Two-part Completion Marker:

VEN: Dos de esto?
Two of those?
CUS: Sí. No uno.
Yes. No, one.
((VENDOR gives him the chocolate, holds out her hand for the money.))

VEN (turning away to put the money away): Solo? *That's it?*	Completion Marker
CUS (also turning away): Sí. *Yes.*	Response

Example 3.37: Customer-Only Completion Marker:

CUS: Tiene harina de arroz?
Do you have rice flour?
VEN: Harina de arroz? [No.
Rice flour? [*No.*
CUS: [Ahah.
[*Uh-huh.*

CUS: Ah bueno. *Ah okay.*	Completion Marker

((Vendor leans over the gate as Customer leaves.))

Example 3.37: Vendor-Only Completion Marker:

((Customer hands the money.))
((Vendor puts it on the shelf and takes down a package of toilet paper, then takes out a roll.))

VEN (handing over the toilet paper): Aquí está. *Here you go.*	Completion Marker

((Customer leaves while Vendor is putting the package back on the shelf.))

4. *Early Endings:* As mentioned earlier, the lack of explicit verbal markers when customers are due change can cause confusion for young participants. In a few cases, very young customers wandered away without waiting for change (and, in one case, without waiting to receive the merchandise), and the vendor had to prompt the customer to come back, as in the example below:

Example 3.38:
Child customer, mother is the vendor.

((Vendor hands Customer a lollipop. Customer takes it, hands Vendor a coin.)) VEN: ((taking the coin)) Solo? *That's it?*		Exchange of Merchandise and Payment
((Vendor turns away to reach into the money box.))		
((Customer runs off.))		CUS ends interaction
((Vendor turns back to the door, holding out a coin)) VEN: Ten. *Here [take it].*		VEN attempts to give CUS change.

((Vendor leans over the gate)) VEN: Ten - niña! *Here [take it] – kid*! ((Vendor gestures through the gate with the coin))		(Attempt to give CUS change continued)
((Customer returns, takes the coin		Exchange Completed
....and runs away again.))		CUS ends interaction again

While slightly premature, the customer's decision to end the interaction when the vendor turns away makes sense when considered in the context of other store transactions, where it is typical to end the interaction by turning away without any verbal closing. Very small children may not be able to predict whether they will receive change; according to Faigenbaum's (2003) research, it is not until the age of seven that children gradually learn to correlate physical coins with abstract concepts of monetary value since they have not yet learned how to correlate physical coins with abstract amounts of money. (But see also Saxe 1988 and 1988b on children's math learning though experience with vending). Since the vendor does not provide an indication that change is forthcoming (she simply turns away), a child will often leave after receiving his or her snack.

VI. CONCLUSION

The structure of store transactions in San Cristobal home businesses are quite truncated in nature – often consisting solely of the request for merchandise and its payment – and frequently lack formal markers of politeness such as greetings or closings. This format contrasts both with studies of customer service interactions in other social settings and with the nature of social interactions in San Cristobal itself.

One may be tempted to dismiss these truncated interactions as being due to small child customers' unfamiliarity with social etiquette. However, these same children do make use of the nuances of polite conversation in other contexts, as for instance in the case of the child customer who says goodbye to the vendor's little daughter but not to the vendor herself, showing themselves competent in their use.

An alternate, and more logical explanation for such minimalism lies in the multifaceted nature of the relationships between participants. Previous studies on store transactions have focused on service interactions between relative strangers, or cases in which the customer/vendor relationship was the primary connection between the two parties (see e.g. Kuroshima 2010). In these San Cristobal family stores, customers are also neighbors and friends. The distinction, then, between store interactions versus neighborly visits, which do require polite greetings and closings, suggests that customers and vendors are indexing different relationships with the same individual in different contexts. Multiplex relationships will be discussed in further detail in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4: THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN THE HOME STORE

I. INTRODUCTION:

At four years old, Pablo knows what a knock at the door means: It might be his uncle, coming home from work. It might be his cousins coming to play. But usually it's someone else: "Quieren comprar!" he hollers out to his mother. "They want to buy!" Duty done, he returns to whatever game has engaged his attention. His little sisters are less jaded, or less knowledgeable. Petra (age three) and Rosita (18 months) race to the waist-high wooden gate blocking their front door and stare silently at the arrival until Mother appears and takes the situation in hand. Sometimes Pablo himself keeps an eye on the transaction, or jumps in to offer a correction; other times he ignores the customer and focuses on his games.

On the other side of town, Pablo's announcement is repeated verbatim by Alex, age five. Alex's mother has set up a much larger store in a separate front room of her house. In addition to the candies and snacks that are also sold in Pablo's family store, Alex's mother sells canned goods, school supplies and over-the-counter medicines; a refrigerator in the corner holds cold-cuts and frozen juice snacks called *bolis*.[49] She, too, has a half-height gate blocking visitors, but indecisive children are invited in to examine merchandise close-up before handing over their peso for a candy. Alex's mother rarely spends any time in this room; customers know to use the doorbell and her metal door echoes loudly if one knocks. Like Pablo's little sisters, Alex is

[49] *Bolis* may be commercially bought or home-made by freezing a plastic sandwich bag filled with fruit juice. During the summer they are a common snack and one may see hand-lettered signs reading "Se Vende Bolis" (*Fruit Pops for Sale)* on doors of households who do not otherwise advertise any sort of retail business, another example of small-scale economic diversification.

fascinated by the business and will trail after his mother to watch the customers, occasionally offering comments of his own.

The previous chapter outlined the interactional structure of the store transactions themselves. In this chapter, I turn to an examination of how children integrate themselves into store activities, how they display expertise and responsibility in front of parents and customers, and how they train younger children into similar competence. Video- and audio-recorded observations of children's contributions to store activities yielded four categories of participation discussed in Section II: attentive observation, self-initiated assisting, notifying adults, and independent tending of the store. Young children learn through being **attentive** to adult activities and adult interactions going on around them (Flores Nájera 2009; Lave and Wenger 1990; Paradise and Rogoff 2009; Rogoff et al 2003;), for instance heading to the store at the first sign of a visitor, or trailing after mother as she interacts with customers or engages in some interesting bit of store setup such as unpacking merchandise. After watching, children may attempt to **help out** with the activity (see e.g. de León Pasquel 2011), or take on a peripheral role such as **notifying** mother of a customer's arrival. Additionally, older children are sometimes **asked to take over** if mother has her hands full at the moment of a customer's arrival (see also Orellana 2009). They are not, however, expected to be regular workers in the store, and in fact parents are more concerned with getting children to do homework or other self-care tasks than with recruiting them for economic labor. Although these parental priorities contradict most Western legal assumptions about in-home businesses and child labor (Nieuwenhuys 1996; Schrumpf 2004), they are quite typical in studies of home-based enterprises around the world (Brandtstädter 2004; Tipple 2005) as discussed in Chapter 1. It is because of this that I attach special significance to children's *volunteered* helping as a separate category from that which has

been *solicited* by adults. The forms of participation examined here (including attentive observation) are ways by which children learn about the runnings of the store in particular and about economic strategizing in general.

In addition to serving as a learning experience, the store is one forum in which children can display their expertise and authority. In Section III, I use a framework based on expertise as a performative rather than knowledge-based identity (Carr 2010) to examine children's self-initiated participation in store activities. Small children's attempts to help out, for instance, often consist of imitating what an adult is doing, while notifying adults about customer arrivals requires an understanding of the multiplex relationships between the family and neighbors.

In addition to the four forms of participation mentioned above, three types of expertise displays emerged from the ethnographic observations: corrections of child customers, corrections of adult vendors, and older child customers' assisting of younger children. In the two forms of correction, the child presents him or herself as an expert through being part of the vending family and having access to store merchandise and knowledge. When **correcting a customer**, the child presents him or herself as having superior knowledge to that of the lay customer; when **correcting the vendor** (i.e. mother), the child enacts a shared role as co-expert rather than claiming superior expertise. In observations of older customers' **scaffolding of toddlers** into buying snacks, discussed in Section IV, both adults and older children ("older" being in this case as young as 5 years of age), downplay their own superior expertise in order to emphasize the competence and agency of the novice participant.

While I use the store as a focal point for this chapter, it is important to remember that this is not the only household activity in which children participate, develop expertise, and display authority. One advantage of the small store as a learning environment is that it has an ongoing,

easily visible physical presence in the household and is therefore constantly available to children's observation and (to varying degrees) bids for participation, in contrast to other economic domains (such as e.g. mothers' distributing catalogs to neighbors or father's work out side the home) which are less directly or less constantly accessible but which also contribute to children's socialization and development of expertise.

Primary protagonists in Sections II and III of this chapter are Doña Elena's three children – Pablo (age four), Petra (age three) and Rosita (age one and a half), and Doña Angela's children – Raul (age eight) and Alex (age five). Section IV focuses on scaffolding by child customers and has a wider range of characters, although most of the examples come from Doña Elena's store. All child and adult names are, of course, pseudonyms.

II. CHILDREN'S FORMS OF PARTICIPATION IN STORE ACTIVITIES

II.1: Observation of Store Routines:

One year old Rosita hurries after her mother as she heads to the store in response to a knock. As Mother helps a young child customer choose a candy he can afford from the display sitting in the entrance to the living room, Rosita watches silently, clinging to the side of the gate for balance. When the transaction is completed, Mother returns to her chores, and Rosita resumes playing with her older sister.

Three children (one hiding under the table) watch their mother sell snacks to a young customer.

It is a common expectation in many societies that small children will pick up necessary skills on their own, through being actively attentive to the world and people around them and through watching adults and older children at work. In these communities, adult teaching methods often focus on

encouraging children to look, listen and follow along with what is going on around them (Childs and Greenfield 1980; Gergely and Gergely 2005; Heath 1982; Ochs and Schieffelin 1984; Rogoff 2003) rather than didactic teaching of skills or rote learning.

A variety of terms have been used for this learning style: *informal learning*, which presents an explicit contrast with "formal" school learning (Pelissier 1991:87), *intent participation* (Rogoff et al 2003), *legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave & Wenger 1990), and *learning by looking* (Cazden and John 1971), among others. Recently, Rogoff and colleagues, who coined the term *intent participation*, have suggested replacing it with the more active and descriptive *learning by observing and pitching in* (Paradise and Rogoff 2009).[50] In this chapter I use the term *attentive observation* to refer specifically to children's conscious and agentive paying attention to adult activities, and to instances where children position themselves to watch adult doings without seeking to contribute to the activity itself (as Rosita does above, for instance). In Sections II.2 through II.4, I also discuss the second part of Paradise and Rogoff's compound term by focusing on how children make bids to "pitch in" and contribute to the various activities they have been observing.

The learning strategies described above require learners to be self-motivated, to take responsibility for their own education,[51] and to observe and practice on their own within the

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[50] Rogoff et al originally chose the word *intent* to highlight the fact that children's observation was "intense and purposeful" and therefore should be considered a form of active involvement rather than passive watching. However, they later changed the term after finding that some readers interpreted intent participation as being "more intentional involvement than we had in mind" (Paradise and Rogoff 2009:104).

[51] The decision to learn is not always left up to the child, however. L Haviland (1978:215) noticed a subtle strategy used by Zinacantec mothers to encourage their daughters to take an interest in household chores: around the age of nine, many mothers would simply stop washing and mending their daughters' clothes until the girls attempted to do the task themselves. "It is no accident that nine year old girls are among the

larger context of ongoing adult work. In the research literature, such strategies have typically been contrasted against Western school-based pedagogical instruction which places the burden of motivating students to learn upon the teacher, focuses on explicit verbal descriptions, and defines the child's role as attending to his or her own task without being distracted by the activities of others (Fortes 1970; Heath 1982; Mead 1970; Philips 1972; Rogoff 2003).

Philips' (1972) study of Native American children in the Oregon Warm Springs reservation is an instance of such a contrast, pinpointing the roots of Native American school-children's behavioral problems as stemming from a clash between contradictory expectations in their classroom and community. At home, children were given household tasks appropriate to their skill level and expected to attempt independent work on their own; they were not asked to demonstrate in front of others until they had perfected a skill and could show it off successfully. This focus on self-directed learning was at odds with the school environment in which teachers regularly asked children to guess at answers they did not know and to publicly attempt tasks they had not mastered as a way of allowing classmates to learn from common mistakes.

Pedagogical and observational learning are not always in conflict, however: "informal" learning styles may easily be paired with explicit instruction on how to watch or with quizzing on knowledge gained through watching (see e.g. Pelissier 1991 for an overview, as well as Basso 1972:40 and Maynard 1999). Communities that prize formal schooling for some skills may also employ informal apprenticeship in different contexts; oftentimes both contexts involve the same children, who learn to alternate between different models (Paradise and Rogoff 2009).

Despite this complementarity, learning through observation, unlike pedagogical learning, requires a physical and social structure that embeds children within adult life and provides them

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most ill clothed and ill kempt of Zinacantecos, and fourteen year olds, now competent young women, are among the most elegant" (L. Haviland 1978:216).

with regular access to adult work. Children whose parents work outside the home, for instance, cannot learn from direct observation of their parents' jobs, but instead pick up understandings about work and work ethics through listening to dinner-table narratives in which parents discuss problems faced in the course of the day (Paugh 2005). Learning through listening to adult narratives can also be considered learning by observation, whether those narratives are directed at children (e.g. Paugh 2005) or are told to other adults within children's hearing (e.g. Basso 2000).

In a series of studies of Mayan mother-child interactions, Chavajay, Rogoff and colleagues examined adults' and children's practices for organizing attention (Chavajay and Rogoff 1999; Chavajay and Rogoff 2002; Correa-Chavez et al 2005; Rogoff et al 1993). Mayan adults, and children from a very young age, are expected to keep track of multiple activities going on around them. As children they are expected to keep their eyes and ears open and be able to help out with an adult activity if called upon; as mothers they simultaneously converse with other adults while watching children or doing chores. Middle-class U.S. children, in contrast, are trained (and even explicitly told in school) to focus on their own tasks; the activities of those around them are considered distractions to be ignored. An observational study of parental multitasking (Chavajay and Rogoff 1999) revealed cross-cultural differences in organization of attention extending into adulthood. The middle-class U.S. mothers in the study shifted attention sequentially between adult activities (e.g. conversing with the researcher) and children's needs; for instance, a mother might pause an adult conversation to help her child with a toy, then resume the conversation once the child could handle the task on his own. Mayan mothers, on the other hand, would attend to both adults and children simultaneously, e.g. steadying a toy for the child while continuing to talk to an adult. In a later study comparing

Mexican- and European-heritage children's attention management strategies (Correa-Chávez, Rogoff and Arauz 2005) the key variable was found to be mother's education level rather than cultural background, suggesting that formal schooling has long-term impacts on mothers' child-care strategies. A similar distinction is noted by Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) who compare cultural environments in which adults accommodate to children (who are perceived as either less competent or in greater need of protection) with environments in which adults teach children to accommodate to their surroundings (whether because children are lower status and therefore expected to be more deferential or simply as a way of training children into proper social behavior).

For the San Cristobal children of entrepreneurial mothers who were involved in this study, the *tienda* is a familiar part of their home environment and they have easy visual access to both the physical space and what goes on within it. (See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the physical store layout.) As discussed in Chapter 1, in-home stores are set up in domestic spaces and often serve as a way of filling enforced idle time while caring for children or as a way of turning a small profit with little capital (since there are no rent or labor costs and inventory can be bought in very small quantities). The store is usually set up in a corner of the front room, separated from the rest of the house by a partition or curtain. But even when the store is in a separate room, the division between economic and domestic labor is very permeable: mothers spend most of their store-tending time in the house proper and children use the store area as a play space (and occasionally a source of snacks). For some families the store is set up in the front room or in the front doorway, meaning that children and visitors must walk through the store itself every time they enter or leave the house, thus increasing its salience as an integral and

familiar part of their home life.[52] Additionally, since customers use the same door as visitors, it is not always obvious whether a knock at the door announces a commercial or a social visit (as will be discussed in Section II.3).

In this study, children as young as one year of age attentively observed and showed interest in adult activities, including the store transactions themselves and other chores related to setting up the store. Although not "participating" in the lay sense of productively contributing to the completion of a task, children's observation is both active and agentive. It is the child who chooses to approach the store during a transaction (or to approach Mother while she is working), and the child who, through watching adult activities and listening to adult conversation, develops understandings about economic and household norms.

The ways in which children direct their attention also reveal their understanding of the interactions they are observing. In one example, to be examined in greater detail in Section II.3, two little girls (one and three years of age), stop their playing in response to a knock at the door and head over to see who the visitor is, even before their mother has noticed. Although they do not attempt to aid the customer, they place themselves in readiness to observe the upcoming interaction as they wait for Mother's arrival, and remain in the store space until the interaction is completed. In other cases, small children follow after Mother as she tends to a customer or while she does household or store-related chores (see, for instance, examples 4.1a and 4.1b in Section II.2).

Through observation, small children learn to distinguish between store customers and other types of visitors. With verbally adept children, this is evidenced by the way in which they

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[52] This is the norm for most of the small stores I observed, although one mother had set up her front *window* as the access point for customers, thus keeping the store merchandise out of the way of household traffic.

notify adults when customers arrive (discussed in Section II.3). Preverbal children also see customers as being worthy of note, although is not certain whether they classify these visitors as belonging to a specific social category (i.e. the ones who come to buy rather than play or talk) or if the visitors are simply seen as potentially interesting people who will engage in potentially interesting interactions with Mother (or sometimes Father). Most of the store customers are also familiar neighbors or playmates, so children's attentive observation not only trains them to distinguish between different types of people in their family's social network but also to understand multiplex[53] relationships which are enacted differently depending on the context.

In addition to attentive observation of parents' activities, children may also attempt to join in or help out with the task. In the following section, I will present a situation in which all three of Doña Elena's children (who are one, three, and four years of age) use various age-appropriate techniques to "pitch in" and help their mother repackage candies for sale. In Section II.3 I will examine a particular common type of unsolicited helping in which children notify parents that a customer has arrived and Section II.4 will focus on parents' solicitations of help from older children.

Sections III and IV of this chapter will examine, respectively, how children present themselves as experts in the knowledge they have gained, and how older children take on a secondary role in order to scaffold younger children into expertise in economic tasks.

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[53] Within a social network, a multiplex relationship occurs when two individuals are connected in multiple different fashions. As an example, Avon vendors often sell to neighbors and relatives, thus a vendor will have a commercial relationship with her customer but will also have a pre-existing relationship based on being blood relatives, longstanding friends, and/or neighbors. This is distinguished from uniplex connections, in which there is only one type of tie between individuals, e.g. a loyal customer who rarely sees or interacts with a vendor outside of the context of buying groceries.

II.2: Helping Out with Store Tasks:

Mother and daughter fill a jar with pudding cups.

Mother is sitting on the sofa with her baby daughter balanced in a shoulder sling on her lap and two-year-old Petra rummaging through a grocery bag full of snacks. As Mother tries to peel a label off a clear plastic jar, Petra pulls out a box of Duvalin puddings cups and climbs onto the sofa with it. Mother finishes removing the label from the jar and asks for the puddings: "Bring it over here, Petra."[54] *Petra watches as her mother opens the package, then the little girl carefully puts the pudding cups into the jar one by one. Baby sister squeals and reaches for the puddings. "You want some too?" says Mother, handing Baby a toy to distract her.*[55] *When the task is done, Mother offers Petra a Duvalin – but only one, she warns – which the girl shows off to the camera. "That looks yummy," I say. "Yes!" she responds and climbs back on the sofa with her prize.*

Cross cultural literature on child socialization links children's participation in household chores to their development of cultural understandings of responsibility, autonomy and personhood (de León Pasquel 2011; Fasulo et al 2007; Maynard 1999; Ochs & Izquierdo 2009; Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007; Ochs & Schieffelin 1984; Orellana 2009; Paradise & Rogoff 2009; among others). Children who grow up in community or family environments in which they are expected to be aware of the activities of adults around them, and be ready to help out when needed, tend to learn practical skills at an earlier age and to display both more autonomy and also

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[54] *Traemelo aquí, Petra, lo vamos a guardar aquí.* Bring it over here, Petra, we're going to put it in here.

[55] *Tu también quieres agarrar?* Literally, "You want to grab/handle [them] as well?" Colloquially used, *agarrar* does not have the same negative and aggressive connotations as *grab*, however.

a greater sense of family responsibility (Munroe et al 1984; Ochs & Izquierdo 2009; Whiting & Whiting 1975). In contrast, in environments where parents constantly intervene to regulate children's tasks the children are less likely to display practical skills or to feel responsible for helping out the family with domestic chores (Fasulo et al 2007; Ochs & Izquierdo 2009). In a comparative study of urban middle class Italian and U.S. families conducted by Fasulo and colleagues, the Italian parents, unlike their U.S. counterparts, did not ask children to do household chores (such as cleaning or making their own beds) and in fact framed such chores as being too difficult and beyond the child's abilities (ibid). In the U.S. middle-class families, parents would frequently attempt to recruit children into helping with the household, but these attempts were often unsuccessful as children ignored or resisted parents' commands. Even though these parents wanted to teach their children to be autonomous and self-sufficient, they eventually decided that getting the child to cooperate would be more time-consuming than simply doing the chore unassisted (Fasulo et al 2007; Ochs & Izquierdo 2009).

Differences in adult perceptions of child autonomy have also been observed across families in the same society. In Solberg's (1990) study of Norwegian children of working mothers, the children who both contributed to household tasks and also spent time unsupervised at home were perceived (both by themselves and by their parents) to be more autonomous than those children who did only one or neither of these activities. Solberg adds, however, that parents' perceptions of children's maturity and the responsibilities they actually assign children are both mutually reinforcing (p 130): parents who consider their children to be mature are more likely to assign them responsibilities which, in turn, confirms their impression of the child's abilities.

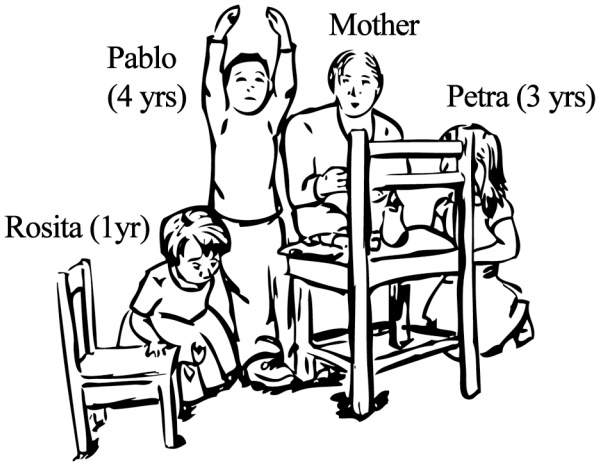
In addition to learning practical skills, participation in domestic chores is also tied to children's socialization into concepts of moral responsibility. Ochs & Izquierdo (2009) contrast children's household responsibility in three societies (Matsigenka, middle-class U.S., and Samoa). While the Matsigenka and Samoan children took on household chores unasked, the U.S. children rarely helped without being explicitly ordered, and sometimes not even then. Ochs and Izquierdo argue that the difference in children's attitudes toward household chores is based on cultural differences in the perception of child competence. The Samoan and Matsigenka adults apprentice children into self-reliance and attentiveness to others; furthermore, this apprenticeship is reinforced both within the household and by other adults in the community. In the middle class U.S. families, in contrast, children's socialization into domestic responsibility takes place solely within their own household and parents are often inconsistent, changing instructions mid-task or ordering the child to carry out a chore which the parent eventually does himself.

The small children of these San Cristobal mothers not only show interest in adult tasks (as discussed in the previous section) but also make frequent attempts to join in even when not requested. In the following example all three of Doña Elena's children congregate around her to watch as she seals up little bags of raspberry candies for resale, and each child uses a different strategy for inserting him- or herself into the activity.

Doña Elena has set up her workspace on a wooden chair placed in front of her own seat (see image below). She has been putting raspberry candies into little bags while her children and husband play, eat noodles, and watch TV nearby. As she lights a candle and sets it in her workspace, all three children (Pablo, 3 years, 10 months; Petra, 3 years, 1 month; and Rosita, 1 year, 10 months) cluster around to watch. She runs the folded edge of each little candy bag through the flame to seal it. As she does this, she teases Pablo for acting "like a baby," referring

to an earlier incident in which he had asked her to put his shoes on. "Big kids put their shoes on by themselves. And they go and get them," she tells him. "They're not all 'Moooommmy, you gooo!' That's what a baby does."[56] Meanwhile her daughter Petra, sitting on her left, makes attempts to blow out the candle.

Example 4.1a:



01 MOM *(to Pablo):* Ya van a crecer.
Now you're going to grow.
02 MOM: Vas a ser grande.
You're going to get bigger.
03 PAB ((stretching his arms over his head)): Si!
Yes!
04 MOM: Pero pareces bebé todavía.
But you still seem like a baby.
05 PAB: No-o.
06 ROS: Yeye.
07 ((ROSITA takes a piece of plastic off a nearby child-size chair, then pulls the chair over to sit by the group.))
08 PET: (?)
09 PAB: Yo quiero hacer (eso).
I want to do (that).
10 MOM: Ayuda pues, ahí si te quemas ahí lo ves.
Help, then but if you burn yourself that's your problem.
11 PAB ((reaches out to handle the packets of candy))
No, (te voy a) te voy ayudar pasar los, los...
No, (I'm gonna) I'm gonna help pass the - the...

[56] "*El niño grande se pone solito sus zapatos. Y va por ellos, no está ahí 've tuuu Maami!' Ésos son bebés. Todo quieren que los haga."*

12 PET: Quiero ayudar.
I want to help.
13 MOM: A ver.
Let's see.
14 MOM: Ahorita me los pasan los pegados para verlos si vienen (??)
In a little while [you kids] will pass me the sealed ones to see if they're (?incomprehensible?)

Pablo's offer to help (line 9) may or may not have been prompted by his mother's previous criticism of his lack of maturity. Certainly that was not her intention, as evidenced by her indifferent response: "If you burn yourself that's your problem" (line 10). His younger sister, seeing the opportunity, chimes in that she, too, wants to help out, and Mother has to figure out something for them to do. Her minimal direction to wait ("In a little while you'll pass me the sealed ones") on line 14 is essentially ignored as Petra decides to pass the unsealed packets to Mother while Pablo turns away from the activity to tease his baby sister.[57] Mother does not comment on either of these responses, but continues working, and attempts to engage Father (sitting on the sofa watching TV) in a conversation about the high price of chili peppers. Although she does not include the children in this conversation, listening to adult narratives is one means by which children are able to pick up the moral valences attached to adult activities and responsibilities (Paugh 2005).

Doña Elena, who is the youngest mother in this study as well as the one with the youngest children, will often engage her kids in spontaneous or organized play where they are the main focus of attention; however in this case she allows them to act on their own while conversing with her husband and doing her work. She does not use their desire to help as an

[57] One of the features of intent participation in many societies is an expectation that children (and the adults they later become) examine the ongoing activity and "pitch in" where they see assistance is needed, rather than soliciting or waiting for explicit instruction. In this particular instance, little Petra (and Rosita, as we will see momentarily) may simply find *acting* to be easier than *asking*.

opportunity for directed learning or praise or chide them for not coming through on their offers to help. She is ready, however, to stop them before they get in trouble, as evidenced a few minutes later:

Example 4.1b:

As the bag sealing activity continues, Doña Elena's youngest daughter (one year old) decides she's going to help as well. Rather than asking to be included, Rosita joins in by imitating the task her mother is performing...

Little Rosita picks up one of the bags and attempts to hold it over the flame.

Doña Elena, who has been ignoring her daughter's actions up until now, reaches over ...

and pushes Rosita's hand out of the way of danger, telling her "Dejalo!" (Leave it!)

Although not as verbally adept as her siblings, Rosita is able to incorporate herself into the activity through imitating her mother. Among Doña Elena's pre-school-age children, I often observed self-initiated displays of expertise, especially from the oldest child Pablo. (These will be further discussed in Section III, which examines children's displays of expertise in store activities.)

One form of helping out which is done on a fairly regular basis is when the child takes on the role of notifier: calling out for an adult when a customer arrives at the store. Adults also occasionally notify when Mother is elsewhere in the house and may not be aware of the presence of a customer, but children do so more frequently. Children's notification, and its role both as a way of taking on responsibility and as a way of displaying knowledge about store activities, will be examined in the next section.

II.3: Notifying Mother of Customers' Arrival:

Pablo and his sister playing. During the game, Pablo keeps an eye out for customers.

Mother is in the kitchen when there is a knock on the door. Her four year old son Pablo looks up from the corner where he and his little sister have been sorting picture cards. "Quieren compRAR!" he shouts out. They want to buy! As his mother arrives to tend to the customer, the two children continue their game in the corner.

For young children, notifying requires being able to recognize and classify arrivals as well as deducing their motivations. There are a variety of reasons one might knock at a door, but an announcement of "Quieren comprar!" identifies the arrival as someone who "wants to buy," rather than someone who wants to chat, sell, ask a favor, or play.

Pablo's notification is a form of self-initiated helping, as discussed in the prior section, and is not treated as a regular responsibility by his parents. Although his mother attends to her son's cries that someone "wants to buy!" she does not ask him to keep an eye out for customers nor does she chide him when he gets distracted by his games and fails to let her know there is someone at the door.

This sort of notifying is not limited to children: because Mother is acknowledged as the "boss" of the store (as mentioned in Chapters 1 and 5), both child and adult household members may shout out to alert her of incoming customers rather than take on the transaction themselves.[58] (Chapter 3 provides an examination of notifications in the larger context of the

[58] In the households observed here, other family members do sometimes offer or are asked to take over the store when the mother is unable to attend, rather than simply out of the room (e.g. if she is on the telephone, bathing, or stepped out for an errand).

store transaction.) The adults in Pablo's household often use the more neutral "Tocan" ("They're knocking")[59] to alert that there is someone at the door; "Quieren comprar" specifically indexes the person as a customer and requires identifying her and predicting her motives in advance. The majority of people who knocked at Pablo's door did in fact "want to buy," but Pablo does make distinctions when seeing a newcomer who he knows has come for a social visit. In the following example we can see how Pablo's reaction to a customer contrasts with that of his younger sisters, who do not notify but are definitely paying attention:

Example 4.2:

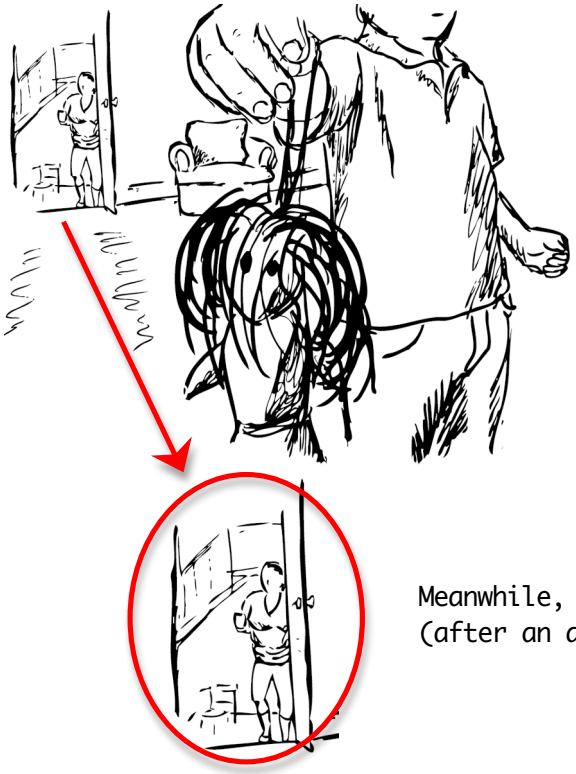
Mother is in the back of the house while her children play in the living room.

Pablo (age four) is waving around a rag doll which he calls La Bruja (The Witch). His youngest sister Rosita (age one) grabs the doll away from him and he tries to incorporate her into the game by telling her to throw the witch.

Petra (age three), notices some children standing by the gate and goes over to watch them; little Rosita soon follows.

[59] The Spanish word *tocar*, which I gloss as "knocking," also includes ringing of doorbells (*tocar el timbre*).

Pablo sees the two girls by the door and realizes there is a visitor. He makes a startled sound, and shouts out to his mother “Quieren comprar!” (They want to buy!)



His job done, Pablo ignores the customers and goes back to puppeting the “witch,” first trying to recruit the researcher (and video camera) as an audience and then for his own amusement.

Meanwhile, Mother arrives from the kitchen (after an approximately ten second delay).

The girls stand silently by the door and watch as she takes care of the transaction.

When mother leaves, the girls return to the game they had been playing before the interruption.

While Pablo was the only one who called out a notification, he was not the first person to realize there was a customer. His sisters stationed themselves in the store space as soon as they saw the arrivals. Yet, they did not announce the arrival to Mother; their participation was limited to attentive observation of the unfolding activity. The older Pablo also recognized that a potential store interaction would take place, but, instead of simply watching, he quickly alerted Mother so she could take care of it. After performing this duty, he did not show any further interest in the activity, unlike his little sisters who remained on the scene throughout the whole transaction. While in this case it was his younger sisters' attentiveness that cued Pablo to the presence of a customer, in other instances he is often the first to notice, even though his interest in the store generally ends once he has fulfilled his role.

"Quieren comprar!" also mirrors the "Quiero comprar" announcement discussed in Chapter 3, which is used by child customers to attract an adult's attention or as a preface to an item request. The similar phrasing is a reminder that the socialization of child-as-vendor and child-as-customer cannot be examined in isolation. As was demonstrated in Chapter 3, store transactions at different *abarrotes* all follow a similar formula, constrained in part by the goals of the interaction (namely to exchange food and money) and the physical layout of the store (which restricts customers' direct access to merchandise). Since adults and children frequent multiple stores, one would expect children of vendors to become socialized into how to buy from others as well as how to sell.

Notification that someone "wants to buy" indicates an awareness that different visitors have different relationships to the family which entail different interaction sequences. It also requires an ability to classify individuals based on the sorts of interactions they tend to engage in with one's family.

Cross-cultural research on children's economic understandings (Leiser et al 1990; Lunt & Furnham 1996) indicate that younger children have a more socially focused, rather than strictly utilitarian, conception of economics. In children's micro-economic strategizing, the social relationships between participants are as important as the potential economic gains, if not more so (Leiser et al 1990). Ongoing economic exchanges reinforce these social relationships, blurring the distinction between the two domains (Faigenbaum 2003). In a study of toy-swapping among British children aged 8-12 (Webley 1996), half to three quarters of participants (with the exact percentage differing depending on age) said they would favor an "okay" swap with a friend over a profitable swap with a child they didn't know very well. In a similar study of Argentinian elementary school children (Faigenbaum 2003) personal relationships were cited both as reasons and as leverage for conducting exchanges (e.g. forcing another child to agree to a trade as a prerequisite for being allowed to play with the group). Additionally, the act of trading was sometimes a social activity in and of itself, as in the case of one child who, after her attempts at profitable candy trades were rejected by each member of her group, promptly switched over to offering the same candies as gifts (ibid:23). Webley emphasizes that this prioritizing of the social over the monetary is not exclusive to children, citing Henry's earlier (1978) study of adults who used similar forms of strategizing, namely part-time traders of illegally obtained goods, who depended on social networks for their economic livelihood (Webley 1996:154). Therefore the blending of social and economic aspects of multiplex relationships should not be taken as a sign of either cognitive immaturity or lack of social experience.[60]

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[60] Adults do, of course, make purchasing decisions based on social concerns, for instance by choosing to patronize "Mom and Pop" businesses rather than chains, local farmers markets, or companies who support fair trade practices (or, conversely, by boycotting companies with inadequate working conditions), even though doing so means paying slightly higher prices for the same quality goods. These situations, however, rarely involve existing personal relationships between the individual buyers and sellers.

The home businesses in this study are based on an overwhelmingly local clientele, with customers often being neighbors or friends; therefore social and economic ties regularly overlap. One would expect a longitudinal study of the children of entrepreneurial mothers to reveal their increasingly complex understandings of the different types of relationships enacted by the same two people (e.g. as neighbors, as customer and vendor, and as cousins) and of the ways in which participants in an interaction can index which of the various relationships are in play at any given moment.[61]

II.4: Independent Selling:

Mother is sitting on the sofa with four-year-old Alex in her lap. The little boy bumped his head while playing, and she has been soothing him until he stopped crying and dozed off in her arms. The doorbell rings, and she asks nine-year-old Raul to take care of it. A woman wants to buy cinnamon; the boy finds the very last package and completes the sale, then he leaves the payment (two half-peso coins) on a corner of the counter. Later on, Mother will notice it sitting there and put it into the change box.

Raul behind the counter of his mother's store

I have previously noted that, for small children, participation in store activities is usually self-initiated and rarely solicited by parents, a pattern which stands in stark contrast to other

[61] One example of this distinction is in the participants' relations to the store merchandise. While food may be offered to a visitor, and family members may use store goods for personal use, customers do not play on their relationship as friend or relative to ask for free or discounted groceries. As discussed in chapter 1, this distinction is not a given in cross-cultural studies of entrepreneurship. In fact, social expectations of sharing wealth with kin can often include the contents of a merchant's store, much to the chagrin of that merchant who finds himself losing his investment rather than sharing his profits.

childhood chores such as homework, bathing, or cleaning up one's toys, for which parents repeatedly encourage, remind, or scold children until they comply.

Older children do help out with the store, but they are not assigned regular responsibilities in that domain. Rather, their help consists of being available to do particular tasks when asked: attending to a just-arrived customer, for instance, or watching the store for a short amount of time while Mother bathes a sibling. Doña Lola, a mother with adolescent children, commented during an interview that her son (age 18) would regularly watch the store when she was out of the house, but that her daughter (age 15) did not like to do so. During field observations, however, it was generally the daughter, and not the son, who would fill in when Mother needed to step away from the store briefly (e.g. to take a bath or to talk to a guest), suggesting that parents perceptions of children's availability is not always reflected in the actual day-to-day activities. [62]

A body of literature on the gendered division of domestic labor within Latin American families indicates how traditional male and female roles are changing, in part due to economic necessity (e.g. Arriagada 2007; Garcia and Oliveira 2011; Gutmann 1996; Mendoza-Denton 2009; Rojas 2007). Other factors, however, also contribute to children's socialization into household responsibilities. Orellana's (2009) study of the role of child-translators in Mexican-American immigrant households notes that gendered differences in child responsibilities stemmed not necessarily from gendered expectations about the tasks themselves but simply from differences in children's availability. For instance, she found that bilingual daughters were more likely than sons to serve as translators for their mothers. This difference was not because of any

[62] One must be wary of applying observations of adult gender differences to children; Solberg's (1990) study of Norwegian children's household contributions revealed that although mothers and fathers followed traditional gendered division of tasks, these restrictions did not necessarily transfer over to sons' and daughters' household responsibilities (Solberg 1990:125).

assumptions about girls' language abilities, rather it was because daughters spent more time with their mothers, were more often in the household, and therefore were more available to translate when necessary. In Doña Lola's household, the son was usually in his room or out of the house, while the daughter was often in the kitchen with her mother and myself, and on hand to help out at a moment's notice when her mother needed an assistant.

Children's assistance with economic activities is requested on an ad-hoc basis rather than as a regular rule. Returning to the example at the beginning of this section, Raul was proficient in selling to the customer, even though he did not do so on a regular basis and in fact showed little interest in the store except as a place to obtain snacks. In another instance, this same boy took care of a customer before his mother even noticed:

Example 4.3a:

Raul (age 9) and Alicia (myself) enter the store in response to an adult customer's knock.

CUS: Tienes café con:: bolsita?
Do you have coffee in:: a bag? [an individual serving of instant coffee]
RAUL: Eh café(/Nescafe). Nno.
Uhh, coffeeee(/Nescafe). Nno.
RAUL: Solo café Conquistador.
Just Conquistador [another brand] coffee.
CUS: (Eh/Bien) A como está la bolsita?
(Eh/Okay) How much is the bag?
RAUL: Dos cinc [
Two fitti [
CUS: [Hah?
[*Huh?*
RAUL: Dos cincuenta.
Two fifty.
CUS: 'Stá bien. (/Dame uno)
That's fine. (/Give me one)
RAUL (to Ali): Me pasas?
Can you pass it to me?
ALI: Sí.
Yes.
((ALICIA takes the can off a high shelf and hands to RAUL, who finishes the transaction))

CUS: Gracias.
Thanks.
RAUL: (Ahí 'stá /Ahorita). Ya.
(Here it is / Now). Done
MOM (from the living room): Tocaron?
Someone knocked?

As Raul and I return to the living room, Mother arrives from the back of the house. She asks him about the transaction and then quizzes him regarding who the customer was, what she wanted, and whether there was any other news to report. Raul gives an account of the interaction, and Mother seems satisfied:

Example 4.3b:

MOM: Qué?
Well?
RAUL: Ehh, Doña (??).
Uh, Mrs (??)
MOM: Qué quería?
What did she want?
RAUL: Un ca - un café, este, quería café con - café.
A co – a coffee, um, she wanted coffee with – coffee.
RAUL: Pero, este, le dije que habrá Conquistador (a dos) cincuenta, verdad?
But, um, I told her there was Conquistador (at two) fifty, right?
MOM: Sí.
Yeah.
RAUL: Y compró uno.
And she bought one.
MOM: Qué te dijo Doña (?)?
What did Mrs (?) tell you?
RAUL: Nada.
Nothing.
((MOM laughs))
MOM: No lo escuché~tocaron el timbre?
I didn't hear~they rang the bell?
ALI: Mhm.
Uh-huh.
RAUL: Sí.
Yeah.
MOM: No lo escuché.
I didn't hear.
RAUL: Eh-hi-hi! ((high pitched cackle))
Eeeheehee!

Mother neither praises nor criticizes Raul for taking over without notifying her and does not comment on the manner in which he completed the transaction. While it is obvious from other observations of this family that she expects her son to be self-reliant (e.g. get his own food when he is hungry) and responsible (e.g. keeping his little brother out of trouble), she never specifically counts on him to keep an eye on the store for her.

A counter-example that re-enforces the pattern of parents not expecting children to be responsible for the store is Doña Mari's *abarrotes*, which is run quite differently. In contrast to the other families in the study, Doña Mari's store was open from morning to night, seven days a week, and relied on the labor of multiple family members including her adult son and her twelve year old grandson. This boy regularly helped out in the evenings, assisting his uncle or grandmother, and doing his homework behind the counter when business was slow. Doña Mari's store was much more active than the others observed in this study, kept longer and more regular hours, and had a more reliable stock of merchandise, which may be one reason for its larger clientele, even though it was not unusually large for a home business.[63] Doña Mari's family also gave their store a higher priority than did other families in this study. Other mothers would keep their stores open while they were in the house, but regularly closed up without notice to go on errands, take the children to the park, or attend a family event. For them the store remained open when there were people at home, but people did not remain in at home to keep the store open.[64] In contrast, Doña Mari's adult son (who was also carpenter by profession) commented during an

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[63] Doña Ana's store, for instance, had a larger square footage and, when fully stocked, a larger inventory but Doña Ana was not always regular about keeping merchandise in stock.

[64] Doña Francisca explicitly commented on her store's infrequent and irregular hours during the time in which she was taking care of her two-year-old nephew whose mother was ill. Being busy during the day, Doña Francisca often could only open the *papelería* at 6 or 7pm. "But people see when I'm in," she explained to me, "and even if I'm only there a couple hours I still get sales because they come by."

interview that it was difficult for his whole family to go *paseando* (on day-trips) together because someone must always tend the store. It was evident, therefore, that Doña Mari's family was treating the store as a primary business while the other mothers I observed used it as part of a diversification strategy: its purpose being to provide a modicum of extra income while they were home tending to house and children.

Doña Mari's business serves as a contrast to the strategies used by the other families. It was a primary economic venture and pulled in the labor of the entire family. While this store generated enough customer activity that it required more than one person's labor to keep going, its larger customer base would not have existed without the higher labor and capital investment of the family. Prioritizing the store allowed it to stay open longer hours and attract more customers with its wide variety of inventory, including produce and fresh *pan dulce* that Doña Mari's son picked up every morning from a nearby bakery.

Children's contributions to household economies have been a topic of dispute since the turn of the 20th century, with international legislation distinguishing between child labor – considered exploitive and harmful – and other forms of children's work such as apprenticeship or domestic work, which are considered to have positive educational and social value for children (Nieuwenhuys 1996; Schrumpf 2004). Home-based businesses however, do not typically depend on the labor of children. Rather, as mentioned in Chapter 1, a more common strategy is for families to assign children low-skill domestic chores, such as housework or sibling caregiving, thereby freeing up the labor of more skilled adults for economic purposes.[65]

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[65] I observed a similar skill-based division of labor during research in a Zinacantec Maya village (Martí in press). My host family included three professional textile artisans; the one adolescent daughter who was neither in school nor skilled at weaving took on the bulk of the domestic work including cooking, cleaning, home repair and childcare. When I was not actively conducting research or engaged in language

Among Mexican (and Mexican-American) households, all members are expected to contribute their skills to "help out" the family, and these contributions may not be demarcated by parents or children as special "work," "chores," or assigned responsibilities (Orellana 2009). An emphasis on domestic work as unmarked family duties leads to a different concept of family responsibility from that of children raised in households where chores are tied to rewards or pocket money (Leiser & Ganin 1996). Doña Elena's quote in Chapter 1 (which I will return to in Example 4.8 in Section III of this chapter) illustrates this attitude that helping out is simply "part of the family."

Given these arguments, it is not surprising, then, that children play such a small role in the running of their mother's micro-retail businesses and that the role they do play is one of a secondary pair of hands rather than a regular worker. As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the reasons mothers cited for opening a store was as a way to fill idle time, or to earn a little bit of money while they were at home taking care of other things. The store often runs in the background, as it were, to ordinary domestic life and tending it takes very little labor, labor which would otherwise go unused.

In the following section, I will examine how children incorporate themselves into store activities and, by doing so, construct an identity as both a member of the store-owning household and as an expert on store routines and merchandise.

III: CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTION AND DISPLAY OF EXPERTISE

The previous section provided an overview of different forms of children's self-initiated participation in economic activities, and discussed how observing and "pitching in" form the

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lessons, she in turn recruited me as a low-skilled labor source who could watch the toddlers and allow her to carry out more difficult duties.

basis for children's learning in diverse societies around the world (Paradise & Rogoff 2009). This section will examine how children enact positions of authority and expertise related to store activities and store merchandise.

The authority of members of the vending family over the store is reflected in their interactions with the physical store space and merchandise, as well as with customers and other family members. In this section, I will first examine how children's **privileged access to the physical store** provides them a sense of authority over store-related knowledge. I will next discuss two types of correction that allow children of vendors to demonstrate to others their expertise about store routines and store merchandise: **correcting a customer** and **correcting the vendor.** In both cases recognition as an expert hinges upon the child's successfully enacting expertise rather than simply possessing knowledge – in other words, expertise is based not on *what* one knows but on *how* one convincingly presents that knowledge (Carr 2010). In Section IV I will examine how small child customers are scaffolded by more experienced participants when buying snacks and candy, and will focus on the socialization of child customers rather than the vendors' own children.[66] As in the two correction scenarios, the construction of expertise during scaffolding hinges upon one's ability to perform rather than to know. In this case the skilled participants are not focusing on their own superior expertise but rather on creating an interaction in which an inexperienced younger child is able to perform as an expert customer.

III.1: Access to Space and Inventory:

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the physical division between store space and domestic space is a permeable one. While barriers and dividers such as gates and curtains serve to separate

[66] In the recorded observational data there were almost no examples of vendors' children scaffolding customers, however anecdotal evidence from interviews with mothers suggests that this does happen on occasion.

outsiders from the store space and additionally to deny them visual access to the home space, for family members, the boundaries between home and the store are easily and frequently crossed. Children regularly use the store space as a play area and mothers regularly use the living room or kitchen as places to prepare merchandise or sites from which to keep an eye out for customers.

One aspect of expertise is "an intimate relationship with a valuable class of cultural objects" (Carr 2010:20) or the successful performance of such a relationship. Children present themselves as experts in the domain of the store through their access to and interactions with the physical store space itself as well as the merchandise within that space.

By playing within and around the store, the child establishes herself as one who can come and go freely, as opposed to customers who must look over the fence or ask permission to be let in to handle the merchandise. Taking food from the store (also done by adults) establishes the taker as sharing collective ownership of the merchandise. Since mothers also occasionally take store merchandise for personal use, the child is following an established precedent and presenting himself as a member of the family with special privileges regarding access to snacks.

Families differ in the extent to which members can appropriate store merchandise for personal use. On the one end of the spectrum, Doña Angela's children will regularly take snacks from the store without criticism; while their mother may restrict their consumption of candy in general, she does not comment on the specific sources of such candy. On the other end of the spectrum is Doña Francisca's Internet center, where even the "boss" herself must pay cash for printing, and the money is physically set aside in a separate box to be used to buy ink cartridges (and occasionally for family members' bus fare). In the middle ground between these two extremes, it is common for the owner of merchandise (who may or may not be the owner of the store) to appropriate small amounts for personal use or consumption. One salient instance of

such appropriation was when Doña Angela's nine-year-old son gave me a gift of a small bottle of mouthwash. After presenting the item to me, he turned to his mother and said, "That's mine, right?" to which she responded in the affirmative. When I asked her about it afterwards, she told me that the small mouthwash bottles which were on display for sale in the store actually belonged to her children.[67] I suspect that Raul's question was intended not only to confirm to her that he had the authority to dispense with the mouthwash as he wished, but also to indicate to me that the gift was from him and not from the family in general. Thus, it can be seen that ownership of merchandise is often unconditional, the owner not only retains the profits of the item when it is sold, but also retains the right to dispose of that item in other fashions as well.[68]

III.2 Verbal Displays of Expertise:

In addition to physical access, the child's relationship with store objects is also established verbally: through being able to name and label items in the store, and to comment on their characteristics and availability. Instances of the former include correcting a customer who used a non-standard term for a particular candy (discussed in Section III.3) and being able to name items for an adult (discussed below). Instances of the latter include correcting Mother about store inventory (discussed in Section III.4), and warning an unsuspecting adult about a spicy snack (also discussed below).

A Tour of the Store: Petra Names and Labels Candies:

During one observation session, I came across two-year-old Petra playing in front of the store display. Upon seeing me nearby, she immediately perked up and began to point out snacks on the

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[67] She did not clarify whether the children had purchased the items using their pocket money or if she herself had given them the mouthwashes to sell.

[68] Exceptions to this rule are items to be sold on commission or via direct selling catalogs, such as Avon, where the vendor is held accountable by an outside entity for his or her use of the merchandise or funds.

bottom shelf and tell me their names. In the transcript below, Petra demonstrates her verbal knowledge of store merchandise and her status as someone who is affiliated with and has control over the store:

Example 4.4:
Petra is sitting on the floor by the door, looking through her Nemo (a Disney/Pixar movie character) backpack. She looks up at me, then at the store display.

➔ 1 PET: Ya ves que (??) son [las galletas?
Do you see (??) they're [the cookies?
2 ALI: [Hm?
3 ALI: Si, son gall[etas.
Yeah, they're coo[kies.
4 PET: [Allá ves?
[*There, see?*
5 PET: (Hay/Allá) abajo. 'Qui mira. 'Cá 'bajo mira!
There below. Here, look. Down there, look!
6 ((Petra gets up, crawls over to bottom shelf))
7 PET: Donde 'sta los po'vos, mira.
Where the powders are, look.
'Quí::! ((pointing)) Cá!
Here! ((pointing)) There!
8 ALI: Sí.
Yeah.
9 PET: (Aquí) mira. Acá.
(Here) look. There.
10 ((PETRA taps the side of the table))
11 PET: Mira aquí hay.
Look, there's some here.
➔ 12 PET: Hay (ca) pastill(etas).
These are (hard candies).
13 ((Petra touches the containers as she names them))
➔ 14 Pet: Y aquí, chocolate. Y (??)
And here, chocolate. And (incomprehensible)
➔ 15 Ali: Estos qué son?
What are those?
((Alicia points to the item Petra just touched))
➔ 16 PET: ((pause)) Polvos!
Powders!
17 ALI: Polvos!
Powders!
18 PET: Sí.
Yes.
➔ 19 PET: Y esto Sapan, a mío.
And this Sapan [peanut candy], for me.

20 ALI: Son qué?
They're what?
21 PET: Míos.
[They're] mine.
22 ALI: Son tuyos?
They're yours?
23 PET: Sí.
Yes.
24 ALI: Todos?
All of them?
25 PET: Yo voy (?) estos.
I'm going to (?) these.
26 ((Petra takes two of the Mazapans))
27 PET: Me va regañar mi Mami?
My mom will scold me? ((sharp upward intonation at end))
28 ALI: Ah.
Ah.
29 PET: Si?
Yeah?
30 ((Petra puts the candies back))
31 ALI: Si?
Yeah?
32 PET: Sí.
Yeah.
33 ((There is a noise from the doorway; Petra looks up, then turns around as her uncle opens the gate.))

Petra showed herself to be knowledgeable about what the different candies are (at least the ones she can reach) and took on the task of educating – or entertaining – an adult with less experience. When she came to a box of Mazapan (a marzipan-like peanut candy), she announced that it was hers. Because she used the singular form "mío," I was uncertain whether she was taking possession of a single candy or claiming ownership of the whole box. She confirmed that they were all hers and started to take some out of the box then asked (or told) me that her mother will scold her. Taking my question as a confirmation of a scolding, she put the Mazapan back.

While adults and older children sometimes take items from the store for personal use, little Petra and her siblings' candy consumption is restricted by their mother. Just as they are

expected to ask for food when they are hungry, so they are expected to ask before taking candy (and sometimes the answer is no). [69] Despite this limitation, Petra displayed to me her affiliation with the store through her knowledge of the names of candies, by physically handling them and taking them out of their boxes, and by claiming the Mazapan as her property, even though she still has to ask for permission.

Pablo Warns Adults about Spicy Snacks:

Petra's older brother Pablo is similarly knowledgeable about store merchandise and not shy about showing it. In the following incident, he takes the opportunity of warning a less knowledgeable outsider about a potentially problematic treat:

Example 4.5:

Mom has been tending to a customer in the store. Petra is playing on the floor in front of the merchandise display. Pablo has been standing next to me (Ali), looking at the camera screen.

((Mom takes a handful of lollipops from the store.))
MOM (handing lollipop to Petra): Ten.
Here [take it].
((Petra reaches up to take lollipop.))
MOM: Párate.
Get up.
((Mom returns to the sofa, handing Alicia a lollipop on her way.))
MOM: Quieres una tu[70] paleta?
Do you want to have a lollipop?
ALI: Ah, gracias.
Oh, thanks.

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[69] An example of such restrictions is a negotiation between Petra's brother Pablo and his mother. Doña Elena refused the boy's request for chewing gum, arguing that his cousins would be visiting soon and when they asked for candies, he would want to do the same. He insisted and finally agreed that if he could have gum now, then he wouldn't ask for anything when his cousins arrived, a bargain that his mother accepted.

[70] The grammatical structure of Article + Possessive is fairly common in this region. In my experience it is commonly used in reference to items that are given, offered or potentially bought (e.g. "vas a comprar una tu suéter?" Are your going to buy yourself a sweater?) or in cases where the item belonging to the person is not otherwise distinguishable from other items of that class (e.g. the lollipop I was given was no different from the others in the bin apart from the fact that it would eventually belong to me).

PAB: Pica.
It's spicy.
ALI: Sí.
Yeah.
((Petra follows mother to the sofa, grinning at the camera as she passes.))
PAB (in a sing-song voice): Pi-ca ya.
It's spicy now.
PAB: No lo (voy a caer) porque es chicle.
I'm not going to (drop it / fall) because it's gum. [referring to his candy]
ALI: Mm. ((pause)) Te gustan las paletas que pican?
Hm. ((pause)) Do you like spicy lollipops?
((Pablo scrunches up his face in disgust))
ALI (interpreting Pablos' expression): No.
No.

In another instance, Pablo helped a visitor pick out a snack that would be appropriate for her toddler.

Example 4.6:

Friends of the family are visiting the household for the afternoon: a young couple and their child. (On the transcript the mother is noted as Visitor and the toddler as Baby). The Vendor (in this case Pablo's father) herds the children out of the store after a transaction.

1 ((Baby toddles out of the store with a chocolate in each hand. The Visitor chases after her child.))
2 VIS: Ya.
That's enough.
3 VIS: Ya agarró otro mira!
He grabbed another, look!
4 VEN: (incomprehensible)
5 ((Visitor takes a candy from one of Baby's hands.))
6 VIS: Y ya lo mordió!
And he's already bitten it!
7 ((Visitor starts to take the other candy, then turns to the snack display.))
8 VIS: Le encantan~mira unas Sabritas.
He loves them~look some Sabritas [a chip brand].
9 ((Visitor takes a packet of chips off the display, walks toward the couch, then turns back to Baby.))
10 VIS (to Baby): Ven.
Come here.

11 PAB: Vas a picar?
Are you going to spice?[71]
12 VIS: Mande?
Pardon?
13 PAB: No vas a picar?
You're not going to spice?
14 VIS: Si?
Yes?
15 VIS (looks at the package): Ah, pero ésta pica.
Oh, but this is spicy.
16 ((Visitor turns back to display, reaching to put the package back.))
17 PAB: Sí.
Yes.
18 ((Pablo goes to the display and points at a package.))
19 PAB: Ésta no pica tanto. Pica un poquito.
This is not as spicy. It's just a little bit spicy.
20 ((Visitor looks at the package indicated by Pablo, then reaches for another one.))
21 VIS: Ésta mejor, una palomita. Para todos, tiene queso.
This is better, some popcorn. For everyone, it has cheese.
22 PAB: Tiene queso si!
It has cheese, yes!
23 ((Pablo hops across the room.))
24 VIS: Cuarenta.
Forty [the price of the snack].
25 VIS (to Baby): Pedro, ven!
Pedro, come!
26 ((Visitor reaches for Baby's hand.))
27 PET: Éste ya no pica?
That one's not spicy?
28 VIS: Ya no pica.
That's not spicy.
29 VIS: Ésta es para todos. Para niños y niñas.
This is for everyone. For boys and girls.

Here Pablo first warned the visitor that she had chosen a spicy snack, then he picked out another item that he felt was less problematic, since it was "only a little bit spicy" (line 19). Despite his grammatically confusing warning (see Footnote 71 for clarification), he repeated

[71] The boy appears to be conflating the special construction "X *pica*," which describes the flavor of spicy food, with the more general meaning of the verb *picar,* namely "to sting or stab." I suspect that he is trying to say, "Are you choosing to sting your (or your son's) tongue with spicy food?" The pun may or may not be intentional. I translated this utterance as "spice" rather than "sting" to retain the parallelism between his warnings ("Are you going to spice?") and the visitor's response ("Oh, but this is spicy").

himself until his interlocutor understood (or noticed) that the package was spicy and agreed that she needed to find another one. Once the problem was averted, Pablo bounced across the room and went to talk to his grandmother. His little sister Petra, who watched the conversation from the sidelines, double-checked to make sure the new item was not spicy (line 27).

In both the case of the toddler's mother and that of the lollipop given to me, Pablo saw an adult about to unknowingly eat a spicy food, and made sure to warn her. He used his superior knowledge of the store merchandise to avert potential mishaps and problematized the snack in no uncertain terms. Pablo himself did not like spicy flavors, which may be one reason he was so diligent about warning others.

To what degree are Petra's and Pablo's displays intended to educate a non-expert as opposed to showing off for an audience of knowing adults? Labeling and naming games are common teaching strategies in schools and used by parents with high education levels (Heath 1982). In such games it is understood that the adult who asks questions such as "What is that called?" already knows the answer, and furthermore has the authority to praise or correct the child's knowledge display. However, labeling games, are far from being a universal teaching strategy (Heath 1982). During three months of observation with Petra and Pablo's family, I did not see any instances of parents using the store or store merchandise as a teaching aid. Petra would sometimes point and name pictures by herself, and their mother did occasionally play a body-part-naming game with her youngest child (although the latter was as much an excuse to tickle as anything else). Yet, evidence suggests that in the instances above and others like these, the child's goal was to share or show off knowledge that the listener lacked.

In addition to educating and protecting visitors, children display their expertise to other customers and to their own parents, though commenting upon or correcting the conversations of others.

III.3: Demonstrating Expertise Through Correction:

Correction of others serves as a way of demonstrating expertise in two fashions. First, one is claiming (and displaying) possession of a body of knowledge about a topic, in this case store merchandise, which is not shared by one's interlocutor. Second, one is claiming a license to correct others, at least regarding information in this particular domain. In correcting a customer, the child aligns with her mother as being a member of the vendor's family and therefore with more knowledge and authority about store goings-on than an outsider would have. In contrast, by correcting the vendor (i.e. one's own mother), the child is enacting a relationship between two experts, one in which he is legitimately allowed to contradict and have his concerns acknowledged. This is not to say that the parent-child relationship is egalitarian across all domains: expertise enacted in one area does not necessarily translate to authority in another. Additionally, because expertise is performative, it must be continually re-enacted (Carr 2010), so the same child who successfully performs the role of store expert on one occasion may himself be corrected by someone else later on.

Section IV examines the scaffolding of younger children, which serves as a way of displaying one's expertise while simultaneously fostering it in others. Rather than using the immediate situation to show off their own skill (as in the correction examples), older children (in a fashion similar to adults) position the younger, less skilled child, as a competent participant and agent in his own right, and place themselves in a secondary role.

Correcting the Customer:

Although these transactions occur between Mother (or another adult) and a customer, small children are often present as attentive observers, ready to join in at an appropriate or opportune moment. Correction of misinformation can be such an opportunity, as in the example below of a vendor's child correcting a child customer. Spontaneous correction of customers serves as a way to display one's superior knowledge (in the case below about the proper classification of candies) and one's position of authority as part of the family who owns the store.

In the following excerpt (briefly examine in Chapter 3), the vendor's four-year-old son Pablo announces to a child customer that he has used an incorrect term for a light-up battery operated lollipop:

Example 4.7:

A child arrives at the store to buy a candy; the Vendor's children Pablo and Petra accompany her to watch the transaction.

1 ((knock))
2 VEN: Qué? ((as she is halfway to the door))
What?
3 ((Vendor walks over, carrying Rosita))
4 CUS: Una ... una luz que enciende?
A .... a light that turns on?
5 VEN ((turning toward the display)): Una luz que enciende.
A light that turns on.
6 ((Vendor picks up one candy from the box and tests it.))
7 ((She puts it back and takes a second one, also checking it.))
8 PAB ((running to the door)): Se –
It -
9 PAB ((positions himself in front of the door)):
Se llama paleta!
It's – it's called a lollipop!
10 PET: Pale::ta.
Lo:llypop.
11 VEN: Aquí está.
Here it is.
12 ((The Child Customer takes the candy from Vendor.))
13 PAB: (No es) luz que enciende.
(It's not a) light that turns on.
14 PAB: Paleta!

Lollipop!
15 VEN ((taking the payment)) Un peso.
One peso.
16 ((Customer leaves as Vendor turns away to put the money in the cashbox.))

Expertise is enacted through the relationship between experts and laypersons, but this relationship has two faces. On the one hand, an expert is a trustworthy source of knowledge and advice; on the other hand, experts can also solidify their superior status by emphasizing the layperson as ignorant and dependent on the expert's own knowledge (Carr 2010).

Although the customer used a non-standard term for the candy, his request for "a light that turns on" was obviously understood: the vendor reached immediately for the correct candy and her delay in handing it over was because she was checking several lollipops to find one that worked. By the time her son chimed in, she had already found the item and was ready to give it to the customer. Neither participant actually needed Pablo's expertise, and in correcting the customer he created a problem where none was present in order to have the opportunity of solving it.

Pablo first positioned himself in the doorway where he could see the customer before announcing his correction. In line 9 he actually broke off his utterance in order to physically position himself in front of the customer before announcing "It's called a lollipop!" He combined his physical stance and unmitigated correction with a sharp tone, presenting himself as someone who must be listened to. The fact that he directed the correction to the customer rather than to his mother, and his stance of authority, suggest that his goal was not to clear up a miscommunication but rather to point out the other child's improper use of terminology. Pablo's sister Petra, who had been hanging onto the gate during the whole transaction, repeated the word "Pale::eta"

drawing it out with a teasing intonation. Pablo emphasized again that the item was not “a light that turns on” but rather a lollipop.

Mother ignored the whole exchange, continuing on with the transaction as normal, and once the payment was received the customer left without closing the conversation. (As discussed in Chapter 3, the lack of closings after transactions is typical, especially for child customers.)

In this exchange Pablo presented himself as someone who both possesses knowledge about the business and has the authority to dispense that knowledge to others, even though he was not a ratified participant in the transaction itself. His authority stems from his superior knowledge, as demonstrated in his use of the correct candy name, and from his physical position inside the gate, on the same side as the vendor rather than the customer. Additionally, by placing himself directly in front of the customer, he demanded the other child's attention. Pablo’s ability to correct the customer may also have been facilitated by the fact that the latter is a child of his own age, but knowledge displays can also be used in interactions with adults, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

Correction and Knowledge Displays in Other Domains:

Children’s knowledge displays are not limited to the store domain. Four-year-old Pablo also uses verbal knowledge displays in other contexts as a way of presenting his authority and ratifying himself in ongoing adult interactions. During a conversation between his mother and myself about children's work (quoted briefly in Chapter 1), he inserted his own opinions which were aligned with his mother’s (underlined in the expanded transcript below), to present himself as one who does work.

Example 4.8:

Mother is talking about her plans to work outside the home when her children are older, and possibly let them tend the store.

1 MOM: Y ellos se van a quedar aquí con abuelita y su papá. Como él trabaja de noche. Yo les digo pa' que Ustedes atiendan la tienda.
And they're going to stay here with grandma and their dad. Since he works nights. And I tell them [it's] so you can watch the store.
2 ALI: Ah.
3 MOM: Pero - es, es parte de, de la familia~también que ellos ayuden.
But it's - it's also part of, of the family~that they help.
4 ALI: Si, es parte de la familia.
Yes, it's part of the family.
5 MOM: Sí.
Yes.
6 PAB: Y también la Petra que ayude.
And also that Petra [younger sister] helps.
7 MOM: Ya sería malo que yo le mandara ((gesturing at her son)) a vender chicles en el parque (?) así yo estando bueno pa' **trabajar**.
*It would be bad for me to send him ((gesturing at her son)) to sell gum in the park, (?) with me able to **work**.*
8 ALI: Si:
Ye:s.
9 MOM: Así sí. Pero así en la casa ellos también tienen que] ayudar
Like that, yes. But like this in the house they also have to] help
10 PAB:] Yo tengo que **trabajar** en kinder.
] *I have to **work** in kindergarten.*

Pablo's statements (first noting his three year old sister should also help and then that he too has work to do) indicate his understanding of the conversation, his alignment with his mother's opinion, and his confirmation that he indeed is fulfilling his mother's expectation of being someone in the family who does his work. There is also an obvious hint that he is a more responsible child than his younger sister. While Pablo did not catch the precise meaning of *trabajar* in this context (i.e. the topic of conversation was the sort of work it is appropriate for

adults to give children), he made it clear that he was indeed *trabajando* (working) and tied his comment to his mother's by repeating the verb construction *tener que* ("have to" do something) underlined in lines 9 and 10, and by interrupting her statement just at the point where she was about to say what the kids "have to" do. Whereas Doña Elena's final statement was "They also have to help," Pablo's interruption translated it to "I also have to work." His insertion of *trabajar* is telling. In the excerpt quoted above, his mother exclusively used *ayudar* (lines 3 and 9) to describe her children's potential and actual responsibilities to their family, which she contrasts with unacceptable parental demands such as "selling gum in the park". Pablo's use of *trabajar* may have linked his kindergarten duties to those of his mother (when she says she is "still able to work") rather than to the "helping out" expected of a child, which he assigned to his sister Petra (lines 3 and 6). Thus, he presented himself as someone who is mature and responsible like his mother, and not a mere helping child.

Correcting the Vendor:

If correcting a customer aligns the child with her mother as having legitimate claim to knowledge about store merchandise in contrast to the customer, who does not have such knowledge, then one might expect that correcting the vendor to be confrontational: putting the child at odds with the parent over whose knowledge is more accurate (or more authoritative). Instead, children's corrections about store goods are not treated as confrontational by parents. This suggests that parents regard children as having valid experience and knowledge and therefore as co-participants with the same goals and interests as the vendor herself.

In the example below, two boys correct Mother's erroneous claim about store merchandise and use mild teasing to hint at the consequences of her mistake and mitigate the potentially confrontational nature of such a correction.

Example 4.9:

A customer has just attempted to buy shampoo. Mother told the customer she didn't have any and the latter left without making a purchase. After the customer departs, Mother and researcher return to the living room where her sons Raul (8 yrs) and Alex (4 yrs) contradict her claim that there is no shampoo.

1 MOM: Champú.
Shampoo.
2 ALIC: Champú.
Shampoo.
3 ALEX: Champú no ha:y!
There's no shampoo:!
4 RAUL: Si hay champú!
Yes there's shampoo!
5 MOM: No.
6 ALEX: Champú de qué?
What kind of shampoo?
7 MOM: (Ahorrita/Bolsita)
(Brand Name / little bags)
8 RAUL: Si hay!
Yes there is!
9 ALEX: Si hay!
Yes there is!
10 ((The boys run into the store. Raul pulls a shampoo off the display by the door.))
11 MOM: Ya terminó.
We're out.
12 RAUL: Cua:l?
Whi:ch?
13 ((Raul shows off the packet of shampoo he has found.))
14 RAUL (in a whispery voice): Mira! (Una) bolsa. Mira!
Look! A bag. Look!
15 ALIC: Ah, si hay.
Ah, there is [one].
16 ((Mom gives an "oops" expression of embarrassment))
17 MOM: ((whispery laugh))
18 MOM: Don'staba?
Where was it?
19 RAUL: Acá – ahí por donde 'stá el Koolade.
Here - there where the Koolade is.
20 MOM: No lo vi.
I didn't see it.
21 RAUL: Quién era?
Who was it?
22 MOM: Doña Rus.
Mrs Rus.

23 RAUL: Doña [qué?
Mrs [what?
24 ALEX: [Qué?
[*What?*
25 MOM: Doña Rosi.
Mrs Rosi.
26 RAUL: Au.
Au.
27 ALEX: ((laughing))
28 MOM: Ya déjalo (Raul)
Leave it, Raul.
29 ((Raul puts back the shampoo))
30 ALEX: (Doña Rosi:)
(Mrs Rosi:)
31 ALEX: De bolsita tu:ves.
You had the ba-ags.
32 RAUL: (incomprehensible)
33 MOM: ((laughter))

In this exchange Alex verbalized his mother's assumption that there is no shampoo. His older brother, Raul, corrected them, and ran into the store to find the item to show as evidence. Alex supported Raul's contradiction by shifting from "No hay shampoo" ("There is no shampoo") to "Si hay!" ("Yes there is!"). Mother showed embarrassment at overlooking the shampoo but accepted her older son's correction. Raul continued to focus on the problem by asking who the customer was, but neither of them make use of this information afterward. Mother finally told Raul to leave the shampoo alone (i.e. put it back where he found it). Little Alex continued to tease her, sing-songing "You had the ba-ags" but she just laughed and let the topic die.

The boys' critique is displayed through a combination of factual announcements and teasing; the former evidenced in the Raul's statement "Yes there is!" (lines 4 and 8) and the latter showing in his whispery voice of feigned shock when he announces "Look, a bag!" (line 14) and in Alex's sing-song at the end of the conversation. (line 31). Their stance toward their mother's mistake indicates that these boys consider themselves (or consider Raul) to be ratified experts

whose knowledge about the store merchandise will be accepted as factual by their mother. Alex's role in the conversation consists of imitating and supporting his older brother's knowledge and authority.

Here it is worth noting the different communicative strategies used by the two boys with regard to the shampoo's presence. The older Raul made use of overly exaggerated affective displays: he presented a picture of shock and dismay, most notably through his whispery voice and the repeated announcements "Mira!" (Look!). Raul caricatured a horrified reaction to his mother's having sent away a potential customer, only to discover too late that yes, there *is* in fact a shampoo the customer could have purchased! The younger Alex did not manage such a sophisticated commentary, instead he aligned with and supported his older brother's claims by shifting stance from claiming there is no shampoo (line 3) to questioning which shampoo is under discussion (line 6) to finally to insisting that there *is* shampoo (line 9), even before Raul had provided the evidence to support this fact.

Like his brother, Alex interpreted the incident as being a mistake which is a potential source of embarrassment but not a serious problem. He teased his mother about this mistake by using a sing-song voice, telling her "Bolsita tu::ves!" (You had a ba-ag!). Like Pablo's little sister in the lollipop example (above), Alex built upon and supported a more skilled older sibling's display of expertise.

Mother's laughter and her willingness to put up with both forms of teasing acknowledged her mistake and allowed for correction from her sons, at least on this matter. Note that when she said, "Ya terminó" ("We're out") in response to her older son's correction she was not contradicting him but simply continuing the conversation and she readily admitted her mistake when he presented the shampoo. In other contexts this mother did take the role of

authority figure: when ordering her boys to clean up or do their homework or when threatening them with punishment for misbehavior. Yet, her relationship with her sons is one that allows for teasing and playfulness, as in the following example, recorded a year earlier, where Alex completes his mother's request in an unusual fashion:

Example 4.10:

Mom is sitting on the sofa in front of the TV. She asks Alex (four years) to bring over her sweater, which is halfway across the room.

MOM: Pásame mi suéter por favor. Aquí está - en la silla.
Pass me my sweater please. Its over here - on the chair.
((2 second pause as Alex tries to pick up the sweater, which is hanging over the back of a chair, without using his hands))
MOM: Ay Alex. Apurateeee. Bueno voy a (traer)
Ay Alex. Hurry uuuup. Fine I'll (get it).
((Alex sticks his head under the sweater, almost knocking the chair over))
ALEX: (Corra)le:. ((giggling))
(Run for it)
((Alex walks up to Mom, sweater hanging over his head))
ALEX: Lo traje con mi cabeza!
I brought it with my head!
MOM: Ponte los zapatos, ven te los voy a poner, siéntate.
Put your shoes on, come here I'll put them on you, sit down.

By correcting others, whether they are customers or family members, the child enacts his authority as a member of the vendor's household who is both knowledgeable about store concerns and has the right to express that knowledge. The child thus constructs her identity as a privileged expert in contrast to the expertise (or ignorance) of others. A different construction of expertise involves building the expert identity of another person, as happens when very small children (around one or two years of age) arrive at the store accompanied by an older child or adult. Rather than demonstrating her own expertise, the more practiced older customer takes on a secondary role to support and cue a small, sometimes barely verbal child into communicating the decisions required of a full-fledged customer. The following section examines how different participants work together to create an interaction in which the child takes on the role of a buyer.

IV. ELICITING EXPERTISE THROUGH SCAFFOLDING YOUNGER CHILDREN

Studies of children's socialization into economic skills as customers (e.g. Faigenbaum 2003) and as vendors (e.g. Saxe 1988) focus on the point of view of the child learner: examining her acquisition of skills and abstract knowledge, the effects of his developmental stage and the practices surrounding the skill being acquired. This section examines the strategies used by more experienced participants and demonstrates how skilled older children ascribe expertise and agency to novices in ways that allow the latter to fill an interactional role that would otherwise be beyond their capacity. Here, the "experts" are child customers not children of the vendors themselves. While scheduled observations of store activities did not include examples of vendors' children scaffolding younger customers, informal observation of other stores and anecdotal evidence suggests that this does in fact occur. [72]

In instances of child scaffolding in store transactions the expert places himself in a supporting role, emphasizing the competence and skill of the less experienced younger child. This practice stands in contrast to the correction examples from the previous section, in which the child uses expertise displays to demonstrate superiority over the customer. Vendors, adults and older children all encourage small children's autonomy and independent choice in the matter of selecting candies (and, sometimes, paying for them). More experienced participants will sometimes simplify the child's role by directing him to candies he can afford or offering multiple-choice alternatives (e.g. "do you want gum or a lollipop?"). Yet, often they simply ask "what do you want?" and interpret the child's pointing as a valid answer.

In the following discussion, I illustrate the ways in which more skilled participants position small children as primary customers and assist them in carrying out this role. I show

[72] For a more detailed examination of the strategies used by *vendor* to scaffold unaccompanied child customers, see Fagenbaum 2003, Chapter 4.

how older children, parents, and the vendor herself take similar stances toward small child customers: validating the child's own decisions and finding ways of eliciting her preferences.

IV.1 Transaction Openings: Positioning the Small Child as Agent:

From the beginning of the transaction, older children, together with the vendor, position the younger child as both the primary customer and as an agent capable of making her own decisions. The vendor's response to a knocking customer is almost always "What?" or "What do you want [to buy]?" to which the expected answer is either a request for merchandise or a question regarding its availability or price. In the following exchanges, the more experienced child customer (noted as Older Child in the transcripts below) has the option of answering the question as in Example 4.11, or deferring to the novice customer as in Example 4.12:

Example 4.11:

➔ VENDOR: Qué?
What?
➔ EXPERT CHILD: Este ... qué quieres María?
Um ... what do you want, Maria?
NOVICE CHILD: Eh...
VENDOR: Ahí está Mari::a.
There's Mari::a.

Example 4.12:

➔ VENDOR: Qué?
What?
VENDOR: Qué van a comprar?
What are you [pl] going to buy?
➔ EXPERT CHILD: Me da dos (??)
Give me two (incomprehensible).
((Vendor takes item, hands to Older Child))
EXPERT (to NOVICE): Quieres uno? Quieres uno de esos?
Do you want one? Do you want one of those?

By redirecting the question to little Maria in the example 4.11, the older child positioned her as a primary participant in the interaction and also trained her in how a store transaction is structured: when a vendor asks, "What?", you are to say what item you want. In example 4.12,

the older child answered the vendor's question but then turned to the younger one, incorporating him into the conversation as a decision-making customer rather than simply a bystander.

Vendors also treated these small children as potential customers. In the example below, when a small girl (about four years old) was visible loitering by herself near the doorway, the Vendor prompted her into a potential store transaction.

Example 4.13:

Young Girl (Güera) stands by the doorway, looking out at the street where a stray dog has been roaming around. Vendor, sitting on the living-room sofa, notices her.

➔ VEN: Vas a comprar, Güera?
Are you going to buy, Güera?[73]
((Another small girl comes up to the gate, followed by Older Boy))
OB: (Vamos a gastar) dos pesos
(We're going to spend) two pesos.
((Vendor goes to the gate.))
➔ VEN: Qué?
What?
OB: Vamos a comprar (arena).
We're gonna buy (??).
((Güera points at something in the store.))

The vendor initially addressed Güera because she was the only one visible in the doorway. When Güera's companion appeared, the Vendor got up and went to the store, using the usual greeting of "What?' which typically serves to prompt a request for merchandise. Yet, despite the Older Boy's appearance and his use of the first person plural ("We are going to spend/buy"), both he and the vendor turned to Güera as the primary decision maker and prompted her to communicate her desires, which she did by pointing.

[73] *Güera*, which literally means *blonde*, is also used as a term of endearment for a fair-skinned or light-haired girl or woman.

IV.2 Güera Example: Young Child Positioned as Primary Customer By Older Child:

After a distraction involving a stray dog across the street, the Vendor and Older Boy returned to the task of purchasing snacks and prompted little Güera to state her preferences.

Example 4.14:

1 OB: Entonces qué quieres (??)?
So what do you want (incomprehensible)?
2 OB: Los bocadiles, ó quieres (huevo [paleta)?
The Bocadiles, or do you want (an egg [lollipop)?
3 VEN: [Güera! Güera.
4 OB: Quieres una [paleta?
Do you want a [lollipop?
5 VEN (to Güera): [Qué vas a comprar?
[*What are you going to buy?*
6 OB: Quieres una Rockaleta?
Do you want a Rockaleta [lollipop]?
7 VEN: Aun no (se te ??).
She doesn't yet (??)
8 VEN: De qué sabor?
What flavor?
9 OB: (De manzana)
(Apple)
10 ((Güera points.))
11 VEN (touches the display): De éste?
This one?
12 ((Vendor hands juice to Güera.))
13 VEN: Ahí 'stá.
There ya go.
14 ((Güera drops the juice. She and Vendor bend to pick it up.))
15 GU: Guauauau!
Arfarfarf!
16 ((Güera bounces and barks, imitating the stray dog))
17 ((Vendor hands her the juice and something else))
18 OB: (incomprehensible)
19 VEN: Solo? O quieres un chicle? (Que sean los dos)
That's all? Or you want gum? (To make it two)[74]
20 ((Güera nods))
21 VEN: Chicle o paleta?
Gum or lollipop?

[74] The vendor is probably referring to the fact the gum and lollipops each cost half a peso.

Both the vendor and Güera's older companion positioned her as the primary customer, by addressing her with questions such as "What do you want [to buy]?" (line 1 and 5) "Do you want a ...?" (lines 4, 6 and 19) and "Gum or lollipop?" (line 21). In line 5, the vendor asked, "What are you [singular] going to buy?" – the use of *vas* (singular *you*) rather than *van* (plural *you*) framed the little girl as a full-fledged customer capable of making her own choice even though it was the older boy who initiated the transaction.

It is a common pattern in the observed data for small, preverbal children to be positioned as agents capable of choosing and communicating their desires. Although not as eloquent as older customers who step up to the store and announce to the vendor, "Give me a <*item*>," these children, with a little help from friends or older siblings, make their wishes known through reaching, pointing, and nodding. In this instance, the vendor interpreted Güera's pointing as being a valid equivalent to a verbal request and presented her with the item. (Because these stores are not self-service, a verbal request of the form "Give me..." or "May I have..." is the typical precursor to purchasing the item.)

While the child's pointing would be ambiguous on its own, it was comprehensible when understood in context: in the physical context of the store space which contains food to be selected and purchased; in the interactional context of the formulaic store transaction, in which a request for an item is the expected next step after a vendor's arrival; and in the immediate conversational context, in which naming an item is the expected response to the question, "What do you want to buy?"

Speakers' turns need to be examined within the larger contexts of both the conversation and the relationships between participants in order to be fully understood (Goodwin et al 2002). The way in which the older boy and the vendor first prompted Güera and then interpreted her

pointing as acceptable verbal requests for merchandise is reminiscent of Goodwin and colleagues' (2002) examination of the communicative strategies of an aphasic conversationalist. Through gestures, intonational patterns, and a two-word vocabulary, Chil, a non-verbal "speaker," builds upon the content provided by friends and family who in turn flesh out his gestures by calling upon references to shared knowledge and experiences. Like Chil, the small child is treated by the other participants in this transaction as a competent ratified participant despite her lack of verbal dexterity. The shared knowledge of the older child and vendor, as well as the formulaic structure of a store transaction, provide a framework for interpreting and structuring her minimalist contributions. Incorporating preverbal children and infants into triadic interactions with adults or older siblings is one socialization strategy used in a variety of cultures (see e.g. de León 2000 on Zinacantec Mayan infants, Heath 1982 on working-class African American children, Ochs & Schieffelin 1984 on Kaluli New Guinean children).

Unlike Chil, however, Güera's and other small children's need for interpretation and assistance are only temporarily granted based on their age and lack of experience; the form and degree of help Güera received will decrease as she gets older and is expected to show greater levels of competence. The following example serves as a striking contrast: here, the younger girl, approximately eight or nine years old, is *not* showing the level of competence expected of her age, and her older companion chides and corrects her rather than assisting her.

III.3 "Sal y Limon" Example: Criticism Rather Than Scaffolding:

Two girls, one in her early teens the other younger, are standing inside the store, asking questions about the merchandise. The younger girl has not listened to the vendor's explanation and the older teen uses an authoritative stance to both present herself as the expert in contrast to her less knowledgeable companion and to chide the latter for her lack of understanding.

Example 4.15:

Older Girl and Younger Girl are in the store with the Vendor. They have picked up a bag of chicharrín[75] and are now examining other snacks.

1 OG (reaching for a candy): Y éstas a cuantas?
And how much are these?
2 VEN: A cincuenta.
Fifty [centavos].
3 OG: A cincuenta?
Fifty?
4 VEN: Sí.
Yeah.
5 YG (taking another nearby candy): Éste es cincuenta?
This is fifty?
6 VEN: Sí.
Yeah.
7 YG (still holding the candy): Éso?
That one?
➔ 8 VEN: Es igual que aquél ((pointing)) pero éste tiene: sal y limón.
It's the same as that ((pointing)) but this ha:s salt and lemon.
9 OG: Sal y limón.
Salt and lemon.
((Older Girl shakes her bag of chicharrín, waiting while Younger Girl examines the candy.))
10 YG (still holding the same candy): Ésa?
This one?
➔ 11 VEN: Es igual que aquél ((leaning over to touch the box))
que está ahí pero [con -
It's the same as that one ((leaning over to touch the box))
that's over there but [with -
➔ 12 OG: [Pero tiene SAL y liMÓN.
[*But it has SALT and LEmon!*
13 OG: Pagale~pue:s!
Pay~he:r then!
14 YG: Cual?
[For] which?

[75] *Chicharrín* is a puffed fried snack made from wheat or potato flour that resembles in texture the more well-known *chicharrones* (fried pork rinds). Although there are recipes for making the dough from scratch, one can buy large bags of premade, dried chicharrines already shaped into rings or squares and fry them in oil on the stove until they expand to double their original size. The end result is packed in single-serving plastic bags and usually eaten accompanied by salsa or lemon juice which the vendor pours into the bag upon purchase.

15 OG: El chicharrín!
The chicharrín!
16 ((Younger Girl gives Vendor a 10 peso coin))
17 VEN: Pero no tengo cambio.
But I don't have change.

Older Girl had been asking questions about snacks and prices while her younger companion only half paid attention. In line 5, Younger Girl asked about a candy similar to the one for which her older companion had just asked a price. The Vendor explained that the two items were the same except for their flavor. Older Girl confirmed her knowledge by repeating the phrase "salt and lemon."[76] Her younger companion, who had been looking at the candy in her hand the whole time, asked once again what it is. Vendor patiently repeated her explanation (line 11), using almost the same grammatical structure, but the Older Girl completed the sentence by telling her friend the difference is that "it has *salt* and *le*mon!" (line 12). Her emphasis on the words and authoritative stance simultaneously emphasized her superior knowledge and her impatience with her companion for not already knowing the answer to a question she had just asked. Younger Girl is not a small child like Güera, in need of help to navigate a commercial interaction, but rather someone who should know better, or at least know to listen. As the Older Girl took charge of the transaction – impatiently telling her companion to pay, and then dragging her off to a different store when the Vendor protests that she has no change – she chided the Younger Girl for not being properly attentive.

The strategies used by older siblings and child caregivers to scaffold small children are similar to those used by adults. Like the child experts who accompanied little Güera and Maria, parents prompt child novices to choose their candy, offer multiple-choice selections, and respect child choices even when they are not what the adult would have preferred.

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[76] Salty and spicy candies are common in Mexico, and the "sal y limón" flavoring in this instance would be familiar to these girls.

IV.4 Juice Box Example: Mother Scaffolds Her Child into Being Primary Customer:

In this example, which was briefly examined in Chapter 3 (as Example 3.22), a toddler (Young Boy) arrives in the store, followed shortly thereafter by his mother. While the adults and the vendor's own son Alex joke about the lack of merchandise in the store, the boy's mother helps him to choose a juice box with the assistance of the vendor.[77]

Example 4.16:
(MOM denotes the child customer's mother; VENDOR is the store-owner.)

1 VEN: (?) fue. Escapó la (name?)
(?) left. (Name?) escaped.
2 MOM: (casa cruz) peso.
(Without even a) peso.
3 ((Vendor laughs))
4 MOM: Ahora qué quieres papito?
Now what do you want, kiddo?
((pause))
5 VEN: No hay nada.
There's nothing.
6 VEN'S SON: No hay nada?
There's nothing?
7 VEN: No hay NADA.
There's NOthing!
((laughter))
8 VEN: No hay nada dice también Alex.
Alex [VEN's son] also says there's nothing.
9 MOM: Que no (entra).
It doesn't fit. (or Nobody arrives.)
10 VEN: No hay nada.
There's nothing.
11 BOY: Eh – éste ((points))
Eh, this. ((points))
12 MOM: Quieres jugo?
You want juice?
13 ?: Bueno.
Okay.

14 MOM: De [ese?
Of [this kind?
15 VEN: [Pero no tiene popote .
[*But it doesn't have a straw.*

[77] This interaction was audio-recorded and supplemented by field-notes.

16 MOM: De mango o de fresa?
Mango or strawberry?
17 YB: De, mm, (?) *Um.*
18 MOM: De mango?
Mango?
19 YB: Si de mango.
Yeah, mango.
20 MOM: Ese es de ... guayaba, no?
This is ... guava, right?
21 VEN: Guayaba.
Guava.
22 MOM: Donde 'sta? Le debo dos pesos.
Where is it? I owe you[formal] two pesos.
23 MOM: A como?
How much?
24 VEN: Seis cincuenta.
Six fifty.

A small child entered the store, followed by his mother, who joked that he ran off without any money. "What do you want, kiddo?" she asked him, to which the vendor responded in a sing-song, "There isn't *any*thing" (lines 5 through 8), which was echoed by her own son, Alex. The visiting child pointed out the item he wanted, and the mother verbally confirmed his choice and attempted to narrow the alternatives: "You want juice? Mango or strawberry?" Juice is one of the more expensive items in the store, especially when compared to the one-peso candies that most children buy (and of which this store had very little on this particular day). Mother silently rolled her eyes when the child chose this item, but did not seek to dissuade him; instead she verbally confirmed his choice and made sure the box was of the right flavor and had a straw. The child's selection was accepted, even though it may not have been what his mother wanted to buy him.

IV.5 Accounting Example: Scaffolding into Economic Strategizing:

In addition to positioning younger children as requestors and buyers of merchandise, older children (and vendors) scaffold them into basic understandings about money:[78] what items a child can afford and how many items a child can get with a given amount of money. In one telling instance, a five-year-old girl brings her younger companion into the store and teaches him about financial strategizing as she attempts to maximize their purchase.[79]

Example 4.17:

GIRL: Qué vas a comprar?
What are you going to buy?
BOY: (J)u(g)o?
(J)ui(ce)?
GIRL: Jugo pero qué?
Juice but which?
GIRL: Quiero...este..a como éste?
I want ... um ... how much is this?
VEN: Cinquenta.
Fifty [centavos].
GIRL: (Por todos?)
(For all?)
GIRL: Y, este, (cuatro y cinco)
And, um, four and five.
GIRL: Éste (??) de una ves.
This (??) all together.
GIRL: Y este nos sobra para uno de estos.
And um this leaves us enough for one of these.
GIRL: Y una paleta (cincuenta).
And a lollipop is fifty.

Throughout the transaction, the two children looked at the candy display together, with the older girl alternating between asking the vendor for prices of different objects and adding up their

[78] See Faigenbaum 2003, Chapter 4, for an in-depth look at how Argentinian vendors scaffold child customers into choosing items they can afford, and how this scaffolding is directly related to children's own level of competence.

[79] This transaction was transcribed from an audio recording, so the children's pointing gestures are not included.

purchases out loud for the benefit of her companion. She showed him which items they could afford and how certain combinations would give them a greater amount of snacks (they ended up not buying the juice in the end). As she left the store, she told the little boy that their purchase came to 1 peso and 50 centavos for each of them.

V. CONCLUSION:

In summary, the participation of vendors' children in store activities is for the most part either self-initiated or limited to immediate request for help with a specific task. Small children find opportunities to watch mothers (and sometimes fathers) sell to customers and prepare or package merchandise, and make occasional attempts to join in with adult tasks. Older children show themselves to be skilled in store routines and store knowledge despite their lack of regular participation (and sometimes despite their apparent lack of interest). Vendors' children also highlight their affiliation with and authority over the store domain by correcting others and by self-presenting as experts, a self-presentation that is generally accepted by their parents. The construction of expertise is also a joint activity, as evidenced by the way child customers scaffold smaller children into decision-making and store purchases. Unlike the correction routines, scaffolding requires that the expert take a secondary role and use her own superior knowledge to allow a less-skilled child to create a performance of customer competence.

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC NETWORKS

I. PROLOGUE

It's 2am in the morning and I'm sitting on a cross-country bus with Doña Francisca[80] and one of her daughters, ready for a twelve-hour ride that will take us to visit family nearly halfway across Mexico. Despite the anthropological horror-stories about long-distance ground transportation, this bus is surprisingly comfortable (even more so than some airplanes). Since it was Doña Francisca who had warned me away from the rickety cut-rate "death kombis" that transport people and packages along the winding mountain road connecting San Cristobal to the lowlands, I wasn't surprised that she would spend the extra money for passage on a larger and safer commercial bus line. [81]

Doña Francisca is on her way to visit her children in Puebla: her two sons, daughters-in-law and grandchild. In addition to a week's worth of clothing and toiletries, our luggage contains massive amounts of baked goods for our hosts: two large bags of sweet rolls, *turrones* (merengue cookies), a couple dozen fruit-filled *empanaditas* tucked away into a cardboard box – about a third of which will not survive the journey intact – as well as several cheeses and a handful of small toiletry items Doña Francisca ordered from her own Avon catalog. The three of us have

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[80] All names are pseudonyms. In order to protect participant identities, I am using different pseudonyms for this chapter (which relies on an examination of extended family relationships and contains information about family histories) than those used on the subsequent two chapters (which include demographic information such as household composition and ages of children). See Chapter 2 for further details.

[81] *Kombi* is the generic term for a small van used as local and long-distance public transportation; they are named after a model of Volkswagon passenger van which was particularly popular for this purpose. *Kombi de muerte* (death kombi) was not a reference to the van itself but to the fact that the cheaper transports were not regularly maintained or repaired.

distributed all these goodies among our personal luggage, squeezing rolls and cookies on top of our clothes so as to avoid excess baggage fees.

Many of these extra items are gifts for relatives: makeup and cookies for Francisca's *nueras* (daughters-in-law), childhood baked treats for her sons, and a toothbrush and holder with cartoon characters for the grandson. The rest are special orders from one of the *nueras* on behalf of her co-workers. This was the first time I realized that *semitas* – those delicious anise-flavored rolls sold for pennies by every corner bakery in San Cristobal, which appear occasionally with our evening supper, and which I squeeze into my own luggage at the end of every field season – are a regional specialty and therefore an imported luxury for the Pueblan relatives.

With sufficient advance notice, the *semitas* we took on our journey could have been baked by the mother of Doña Francisca's daughter's boyfriend, a baker with whom the family has a standing order for 25 pesos worth of *pan dulce* every week to be delivered by the young suitor when he comes to visit. This would have made a fitting touch to a narrative about local and long distance kin networks, but the extra rolls were actually a last-minute decision and there was no time to get in touch with the baker. Instead we picked up the *semitas* from a neighborhood bakery on the afternoon before our trip.

One of Doña Francisca's Pueblan *nueras* is another "entrepreneurial mother," although outwardly she does not much resemble the women in this study. Señora Susi lives with her husband and young son in a suburban condominium in a planned community. Residential buildings and neat lawns are interspersed with strategically situated commercial areas containing a convenience store, internet center, *tortillería* (store specializing solely in tortillas) and laundromat. There are no little shops in residents' front rooms, no open doorways waiting for customers. Susi, unlike most of the mothers I interviewed, has a full-time job, but she still shares

that tendency to turn her hand to various part-time activities and, like these other women, she is supported by her own network of mostly female relatives. She takes special orders from neighbors and coworkers for regional Chiapaneco delicacies whenever her *suegra* Francisca comes to visit. She also assists her own mother in selling jewelry through a direct-sales catalog company, and helps another in-law who buys bulk brand-name goods (dish detergent, skin lotion, floor cleaner) which are resold informally to friends and relatives who bring their own reusable soda bottles. When I marvel at her diversity of activities, she laughs. "De todo un poco!" she tells me. We do "a little bit of everything." Both Doña Francisca and Doña Susi depend on local neighbor and kin networks – and on long-distance ties to Puebla and Chiapas respectively – to build and maintain their multiple economic activities, and both of them gain enjoyment out of turning their hand to a variety of tasks and doing "a bit of everything."

II. VIGNETTES OF DAILY LIFE

This chapter presents a series of vignettes that illuminate the ways in which familial, neighbor, and social ties serve as a means of economic support for families in San Cristobal. In most of these cases economic resources are intertwined with emotional support networks, and the relationships between individuals are multiplex: customers are also neighbors, suppliers are also relatives. The data are drawn from observations over three years of dissertation fieldwork, together with cultural background information gleaned from the seven years that I have spent travelling between San Cristobal and Los Angeles while conducting my dissertation and master's research. Some examples are drawn from recorded observations of household activities, while others are from interviews and narratives. The chapter covers five main themes. First, I analyze **how social relationships serve as economic resources** for households and extended families, drawing upon two husbands and a mother-in-law who proved vital to the establishment of three

home stores. Second, I discuss what it means to *be* an economic resource for others and **how one's embeddedness in such networks creates a sense of personal responsibility**. I examine repercussions of being a reluctant vendor, how a marital dispute can break economic contracts, and how a wedding can create them. The next two sections focus on salient cases of situated responsibility: how ***compadrazgo*** **(godparentage)** combines the intimacy of kin relationships with the responsibility of financial sponsorship, and how a group centered around **shared professional activities** (specifically cosmetics catalog vending) linguistically transforms their relationship into a professional support network with a moral obligation to help each other. Finally, I **expand the geographic focus** beyond the San Cristobal neighborhood to illustrate how these ties are extended across the country and even across borders: with two husbands who travelled north, a wife who travelled south, and returning once again to Doña Francisca's story and how a mother uses family visits to supplement her business and economic networks to underwrite family vacations.

III. FAMILY NETWORKS AS ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Doña Francisca and the other women in this study make use of their established relationships with relatives, neighbors and friends to gain access to needed resources, skills, and information. Kin and neighbor networks are of key importance in many societies, especially in situations of economic uncertainty or instability. As discussed in Chapter 1, the entrepreneurial mothers whom I observed and interviewed made use of such networks as the foundations of their economic ventures.

Doña Rosa and Doña Norma have husbands who work for wholesale distributors. These men travel across town and out of town taking orders and making deliveries for retail businesses of various sizes. Doña Rosa and Doña Norma know other such wholesalers and each woman

could, in theory, have struck up negotiations with any one of them depending on her tastes and interests.[82] Yet each constructed her store around the types of goods that she could order through her husband's professional position. While the sign hanging over the shop door reflects this categorization (pharmacy, stationary store, dried goods store, etc.), Doña Rosa and Doña Norma are not loath to fill their businesses with other, often unrelated, merchandise that comes their way based on interest or opportunity. Thus, the *farmácia* makes its primary business off of selling snacks, and the *papelería* has a whole display case devoted to perfumes.

III.1 The Importance of /Diverse Networks:

Economic diversification at the household level is a common and successful strategy for dealing with environments of economic uncertainty or for situations in which formal labor is scarce or insufficient (Barrett et al 2001; Halperin 1990; Mezzera 1989). Likewise, in situations where there is little trust in anonymous institutions, making use of individuals who are personally known to one is a safer and more stable alternative (Giddens 1990). Just as it becomes safer and more profitable to diversify one's activities into multiple ventures, it is also helpful to cultivate networks that include a variety of different people. Those gregarious individuals who have friends or relatives in different walks of life and who are eager to help others by making introductions become valuable resources indeed.

In some cases, having access to the right person with the right resources can be the key to a new business. Doña Guadalupe's store would literally not exist without the aid and blessing of her mother-in-law: Doña Carmen is the owner and boss of the small building which houses five adults and five children encompassing four generations of family (from Carmen's own mother

[82] Doña Rosa could have ordered from the elder Doña Norma's husband, for instance, while Doña Norma herself was an Avon vendor even before she opened her own shop.

down to her infant grand-daughter). It was with her permission (and, she claims, at her suggestion) that Doña Guadalupe set up a merchandise display in her *suegra's* front room. This was not a favor lightly granted: every visitor and family member must now make his or her way past the store in order to enter Doña Carmen's home, and Doña Carmen receives no profit from the donation of this space, although she has taken advantage of her *nuera*'s budding business by inserting her own merchandise into the inventory which the younger woman sells. This is not an unusual practice, and sharing work (such as one person selling another's merchandise) is another way in which family members combine resources, even when they keep money and merchandise separate.

III.2 Shared Labor and Shared Favors Within the Family:

While financial expenses are often kept separate and accounted for, and ownership of store merchandise is based on the person who paid money for the item rather than the one who made the sale, it is quite common for family members to pool their labor without keeping accounts.

When Sofía's cousin got married, various relatives took on the responsibility for helping with the expenses (a topic I will discuss in greater detail in Section III). Sofía's own job was to provide *recuerdos*,[83] small party favors that guests could take home after the dinner reception as a souvenir of the event. Unfortunately she did not have a clue how to make the sort of *recuerdo* that she wanted, and turned to her aunt for help – not because the older woman was the mother of the bride, but because she was skilled in the elaborate ribbon-folding that Sofía had in mind. Her

[83] Every party that I have attended in San Cristobal, from wedding receptions to a three year old girl's birthday, featured some sort of *recuerdo*: a party favor or souvenir for guests to take home. The more elaborate ones were customized with the name of the couple or the celebrant and the date. These were typically hand assembled out of ribbons, hot glue, and small plastic knick-knacks that could be bought in bulk specifically for this purpose.

aunt made such items on commission for special events, and her small store had a display of various samples of her work, ranging from tiny baby baskets made from painted bottle caps and lace to large candles in the shape of wine glasses. Sofía asked her aunt to make the party favors for her, and it was agreed that she would pay the older woman the amount of money it would have cost her to make the *recuerdos* herself.

While social networks are frequently used to locate individuals with needed skills or resources, the actual transactions are usually remunerated. One may call upon one's cousin or next-door neighbor when one needs a lipstick or a computer hard-drive, but it is taken for granted that one will of course pay full price for these items. It was Doña Sofía's responsibility to obtain the ribbons for the wedding decorations and the means by which she did it was up to her. By contracting her aunt, she was asking the older woman to do something that would cost her money (for the materials) and would be contributed to the wedding under Sofía's name and not her own. By agreeing to help out, Sofía's aunt was contributing her labor to the cause, but the financial burden of buying the materials fell upon her niece. (If, on the other hand the aunt had volunteered to contribute the *recuerdos* herself, they would have been under her own name and the money would have come from her own pocket.) [84]

While asking for favors of this sort occurs sometimes between relatives, within the household such sharing of labor happens as a matter of course, with siblings or parents working together to help one of their own complete an obligation, without expectation of recompense, as in the example of Ambar.

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[84] I did not determine in this case whether the money Sofía gave her aunt was strictly to cover the cost of the materials or whether she commissioned her aunt as a non-relative would have and paid for the finished goods.

Ambar is a young, college graduate in her mid-twenties, temporarily unemployed. While she is looking for permanent work, she earns money doing occasional typing and word-processing for neighbors. Once or twice, Ambar has been called on short notice for job interviews and has been forced to leave an unfinished typing job behind. Her mother, although much less familiar with the computer, would sit down to slowly complete the task, so the customer would receive their document by the agreed-upon deadline and her daughter would not lose the money or reputation. It was given as obvious, however, that this was Ambar's commission, not the mother's, and that Ambar was the one who would be paid. On other occasions, Ambar herself has stayed up late helping her father sort and package merchandise that he had to deliver to a customer. To quote Doña Guadalupe from Chapter 1, such helping out is "part of being family."

Labor within the store is shared in a similar fashion. Nearly every store that I observed contained at least a few items for sale that had been purchased and placed there by one of the family members (usually an adult but occasionally a child). Regardless of who made the sale, the profits from those items were set aside for the original owner. Similarly, every single store that I observed was tended for small stretches of time by a household member who was not the storeowner. (Children's role in helping with the store is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4). Here I use the designation of 'owner' in the emic sense: family members and friends referred to the store (and its profits) as belonging to the mother rather than as a shared enterprise. All of these helpers were knowledgeable enough to be able to take care of a customer if the mother's hands were full (albeit sometimes with a bit of shouting across the house to determine merchandise prices), but none of them were considered regular workers. Labor within the

household is not a matter of hired work for earned pay, but rather of family members filling in for each other when needed.

The sign outside of Doña Rosa's front door advertises "Farmácia Guadalupe," a local pharmacy where one can buy medicines as well as dry goods. What the sign does not advertise is that, in addition to running this store, Doña Rosa is also a trained hairdresser.

One afternoon I arrived at the *farmácia* to find Doña Rosa's relatives visiting, her mother, her two sisters and a little niece. The three women had taken their children to a local playground and were now relaxing in the living room, while the youngsters played in the back yard. Soon I discovered a second reason for the visit, as Doña Rosa gets up and turns her living room into a miniature hair salon to give her younger sister a trim. A mirrored vanity table in the corner became a workstation, and a kitchen chair was co-opted as a seat for the client. From the drawers of the vanity table emerged the tools of the trade, including a multi-pocketed apron for the beautician and a smock for the client, and Doña Rosa quickly set to work. "Con capas Señorita" joked her sister, mimicking a client giving orders to her stylist, "I'd like it cut in layers, Miss." As it turns out, Doña Rosa regularly gives haircuts to both relatives and neighbors. Sometimes she brings her equipment when she visits her mother's house; on one such occasion I had dropped by to ask Doña Sofía a favor and found the two of them in the front patio, the older woman wrapped in a smock, while the younger one skillfully wielded her scissors.

Doña Rosa doesn't charge her family for this service, but she does charge her neighbors. They know to come to her for trims, perms and dyes, even though she has never advertised. This practice does not contradict the assertion that family members do not receive discounts, as Doña Rosa's hairstyling business is built on her labor and training rather than on merchandise for

which she herself has paid money. Such labor and time *are* often shared among family members without expectation of recompense.

III.3 What is Shared and What is Bought?

When is helping out considered "being part of the family," and when is it an economic exchange that must be remunerated? The distinction appears to be one of labor versus product. In the cases of husband wholesalers, Doña Sofía hiring her aunt, and the many girls and women who buy Avon makeup from their relatives, the person who provides a good or service must herself pay money to a third party: Doña Sofía's aunt must buy the ribbons from which the decorations are made, Doña Rosa and Doña Norma's husbands must pass on their wives' money to their employers who actually sell the wholesale merchandise, and the Avon vendors must deliver payment for the goods their customers have requested. In each of these cases, to ask for free services would be to put a financial burden on a relative tantamount to asking them for a gift.[85]

Labor, on the other hand, can be seen as a "free" commodity, since it is produced by the worker who did not have to pay money to obtain it. Although one might make money from selling one's labor (e.g. by making *recuerdos* on commission or cutting hair), the money one 'loses' by giving it away for free is only potential profit, not actual currency out of one's own pocket. Especially in the case of the entrepreneurial mothers in this study, the labor being expended to keep the store running is often not calculated into the equation, perhaps because it is seen as idle time that is being filled by the store rather than time which must be subtracted from

[85] As discussed in Chapter 1, in many societies such a financial burden is an expectation and family members who do not share the goods for which they have paid are considered to be reneging on their familial obligations.

other duties. Indeed, one reason for opening a store in one's home is because it can be tended simultaneously with many other household activities.[86]

IV. NETWORKS AS RESPONSIBILITY: BEING A RESOURCE FOR OTHERS

In analyzing how entrepreneurial mothers balance economic decisions and strategies, I have focused primarily on the use of social and kin networks as resources: for money, for labor, for goods, or for emotional support. But being part of a network also involves responsibility: as a person with skills or goods, one is now serving as a resource for others. While one is able to draw upon friends and family in time of need with an expectation of receiving aid, one must also be prepared to lend one's own skills or talents to those who ask for them. As has been illustrated in Chapter 1, entrepreneurial mothers have multiple skills and multiple enterprises that can be drawn upon by friends or family, as in the case of Doña Rosa the hairdresser.

IV.1 An Ongoing Social Commitment:

Being a resource for others can be financially and emotionally satisfying, and some of the women interviewed talked positively about having others come to them for help. But being a resource is also an ongoing commitment. When one gains a reputation for having or having access to certain valuables, there is an expectation that one must deliver – whether this be information, goods for sale, or the social connections to others who can provide such information or goods. By not doing so, one is letting down friends and relatives who have come to depend on one. This sense of responsibility is highlighted by Inés, one of several catalog vendors whose

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[86] As a counter-example: during my participation in an online semi-professional art community based in the U.S, professional illustrators would stress to novices that when selling artwork they must factor in the time spent on a piece in addition to the cost of materials. A how-to article written by one such expert (Million 1998) even suggested determining a fair hourly wage based on the artist's own skill level and using this in pricing calculations.

meetings I attended in the course of my fieldwork (the examination of catalog vendors' meetings is discussed in further detail in Section III).

During a conversation with a group leader for one of the many cosmetics companies whose merchandise she sells, Inés explains why she maintains her membership in multiple companies rather than focusing her efforts and her loyalty on just one. She tells the group leader and myself a story about her stint as a saleswoman for Jafra,[87] another direct sales cosmetics company, and concludes with:

Inés: Y ya, este, en - cuando estuve en Jafra? Bueno, estoy, pero ya es por algo que, que si me pide alguien algo, y "Saben qué, (necesito) tal cosa." Me lo puede, este, dependiendo pues, porque también es producto caro.

And, um, in – when I was in Jafra? Well, I [still] am, but now it's for a reason so, so if someone asks me for something, like "You know what, I (need) thus and such." They can, well depending of course because it's also an expensive product.

Tomás: Claro.

Of course.

Inés: Si: si reúno los, los puntos - que son 1500, precio costo - lo meto. Si no, le digo "Sabe qué, este, mándenmelo y me lo juntan," hasta eso.

I:f, if I collect the, the [minimum] points – it's 1500 list price - then I send it in. If not, I'll say "You know what, um, send it to me and I'll save them up," I'll even do that.

Inés: Y han dado la facilidad que me lo junten y ya lo meten al mes (como -) O veo algunas ofe:rtas que me convengan y ahí con eso. Como lo (paquete) de (??) pedido. No me están exigiendo, mes por mes.

And they give the option of saving up [the customer requests] and then I send them in the next month, like - Or suppose I see some offers that are useful to me, then with that. Like the package of (??) I ordered. They're not pressuring me every single month.

[87] According to one of my participants, Jafra is similar to Avon with a greater emphasis on perfumes and more expensive (possibly more-high end) products. It also requires a higher minimum order, unlike other companies who allow vendors to request only one or two products per order.

Inés: Este, y ya de vez en cuando meto un pedido. Y afortunadamente no me dan de baja!

Um, and then once in a while I send in an order. And fortunately they haven't removed me!

Having earned a local reputation as a Jafra vendor, Inés's friends and neighbors now saw her as a resource for that product. Even though her interest in the company waned for a variety of reasons – partly because she was enticed by other business opportunities and partly because Jafra's expensive prices and high minimums made it difficult for her earn a profit – she still felt responsible to those individuals who had come to count on her. She could have directed them to one of the other vendors whom she knew, but instead she chose to keep her ties to Jafra for the sake of those neighbors who had shown loyalty to her, even though sometimes she did not even receive enough *pedido* (orders for merchandise) to meet Jafra's minimums and had to delay on the orders she did receive.

Inés' explanation shows the opposite side of the customer-vendor relationship. Being known to her networks as a vendor, she now had a responsibility to provide friends and family with the product when they requested it. Inés could have simply told her neighbors she no longer sold, and directed them to another vendor. Instead, she kept her membership active and continued to send in sales on a smaller scale, saving up the customer orders until she had the minimum amount required by the company. Although she was not soliciting sales from new customers, this way she could continue to provide Jafra to members of her existing network who had come to see her in that role. Likewise, at least some of her former customers continued to maintain that relationship by ordering merchandise through her rather than looking for more active vendors who could deliver their purchases more quickly.

In this case, Inés considers the social ties to these customers to be valuable enough for her to continue to engage in an activity she found less interesting and not very productive. The balance between economic strategizing and the maintenance of social relationships is negotiated differently from individual to individual and from community to community. In Chapter 1, I briefly footnoted Pomponio's (1993) case study of Agnes Keke, the New Guinean exporter of sea cucumbers who avoided social obligations to share merchandise with relatives by specializing in a type of food that none of her family would eat, and who additionally built up a reputation as a supportive and generous woman by providing low-skill, good paying jobs to her indigent kin. Another example of such a balancing act, and one which emphasizes the usefulness of economic diversification as a social tool, is Yan's (2004) case study of Mr. Wang, the Chinese bookkeeper. Mr. Wang ran several economic enterprises including, farming, dairy and chicken raising, renting a tractor, and a profitable money lending business. Money-lending has the potential to be very disreputable: a man who makes his money by charging interest to his neighbors runs the risk of being seen as greedy and lacking a social conscience, too concerned with profit rather than community relationships. Mr. Wang satisfied social obligations and maintained his reputation as a socially embedded man and a good neighbor through offering discounts and favors in his other enterprises (e.g. allowing friends to rent his tractor for only the cost of the fuel). Thus, he balanced his efforts between multiple activities, some of which turned a profit while others which may have been financial drains were socially important to his role as a contributing member of his community.

IV.2 When Networks Break Down:

While social ties can be used to connect to other people with the skills, information, or goods one needs, they may also limit the sorts of economic connections one has access to. Mr.

Wang could not operate his business without having a good social reputation within the community, while Inés's sense of obligation to her neighbors would not let her break ties with a company after she lost interest. Similarly, one may feel obligated to hire a relative for a task rather than a more skilled stranger, or to buy from one Avon vendor rather than another based on personal relationships. A breakdown in one's social relationship can likewise disrupt or destroy an economic relationship with that same person. A brief instance of this is Don Carlo's nephew. Don Carlos and his wife ran a small food stand at a local elementary school.[88] Since they did not own a car, they had a standing arrangement with their niece's husband, who owned a taxi, to drive them to work every morning.[89] When I returned to San Cristobal for my second year of fieldwork, I learned that the niece and her husband had separated, and that he and his taxi had moved out of her house. Don Carlos and his wife no longer hired their nephew to get to work in the morning but instead had to make use of a different taxi driver.

V. COMPADRAZGO: FORMAL RECOGNITION OF EMOTIONAL AND ECONOMIC SPONSORSHIP:

Social networks are activated on a daily basis: for regular purchases as in the case of Doña Norma's school-age nieces who drop in on her whenever they need supplies for class projects; for scheduled activities as in the case of Don Carlos's nephew who drove his aunt and uncle to work every morning; or for unexpected emergencies, as in the case of my San Cristobal landlady who found herself babysitting her nephew for several weeks when his mother took ill.

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[88] This is one of the lunch counters briefly mentioned in the comparison of child and adolescent monetary strategizing in Chapter 3.

[89] Most of the families with whom I interacted in San Cristobal did not own cars, which were expensive, difficult to navigate the narrow streets and steep hills, and required extra space to store. Instead they depended on taxis, busses or bicycles to get to work and school.

But the intertwining of emotional and economic bonds are most visible in the recognition of life milestones such as baptisms, *quinceañeras* (coming-of-age parties) and weddings, where the family's broad support network becomes activated and comes together to organize and fund a celebration, in the process touching upon or creating relationships of emotional support and financial responsibility.

The Mexican tradition of *compadrazgo* epitomizes both the degree to which economic and familial responsibilities are intertwined and the heavy reliance upon one's kin and neighbor networks as support resources. *Compadrazgo* is based on the Catholic tradition of godparentage, in which a respected (and often financially well-off) family friend takes on the role of sponsor at a child's baptism, becoming in a sense a secondary parent responsible for the child's religious education. In Latin American Catholicism, a young adult may have multiple *padrinos* (godparents), assigned at religious milestones such as baptism, first communion, confirmation and marriage; additionally, secular events of importance such as the *quinceañera* held on a girl's fifteenth birthday or a school graduation may also involve the selection of *padrinos* (Kemper 1982).

Mexican Catholicism expands the concept of godparentage beyond a single pair of surrogate parents into an entire fictive kin network. In a large ceremony such as a wedding or *quinceañera,* financial sponsorship of the event is divided among multiple friends and relatives, each of whom is classified as the *padrino* or *madrina* (godfather or godmother) of their particular domain of responsibility. Thus a relative who paid for and provided the champagne at a wedding would be *padrino del brindis* (godfather of the toast), while the couple who hired the musicians would be *padrinos de la música* (godparents of the music). By taking on the role of *padrino/madrina de X*, the sponsor helps to fund a celebration on a larger scale than the family

could do alone. His or her relationship to the child (and the child's parents) becomes formalized in a fashion similar to, albeit on smaller scale than, the standard Catholic godparents. This practice of assigning sponsorship to kin or friends imbues the monetary aid with a sense of moral responsibility. Familial networks become sources of economic and emotional support, while economic contributors become legitimized through fictive familial relationships. Additionally, *compadrazgo* is more than a dyadic relationship between godparent and godchild: the godparent also becomes *compadre* or *comadre* (literally "co-father" or "co-mother") to the child's own parents, a relationship which is both formal and intimate and can sometimes supersede existing kin relations. In Jelm and Richman's (2010) study of fictive kin networks among Mexican immigrants in the United States, one interviewee explained that if her sister were chosen as her child's *madrina* she would switch to the formal *Usted* (you) address form rather than the informal (*tú*) address form used between siblings to emphasize the relationship. Although I did not observe this practice among the younger secondary *padrinos* whom I knew in San Cristobal, the difference may be simply one of degree – being *madrina* of, for instance, the wedding bouquet is not the same as being *madrina* of the wedding itself. Or, it may reflect different ways in which social practices are used and negotiated by individuals to build the sorts of relationships that they wish to have with each other. Being a *compadre* to one's sibling or best friend offers the possibility of redefining the relationship but does not require it.

Financially, the practice of assigning *padrinos* and *madrinas* to every aspect of the ceremony allows a family of limited means to put on an event that is much larger and more lavish than any they could manage alone, to invite more guests, and to make the milestone a community event rather than simply a select family gathering. Socially, by making key

individuals responsible for contributing to the event, it becomes a shared community effort, strengthening the relationships between participants (Jelm 2010; Alvarez 2007).

V.1 Case Study: Margarita's Wedding:

During fieldwork I attended one baptism and two weddings and was closely involved in the preparations for the wedding of my friend Margarita, a young woman whose family I came to know during my stays in San Cristobal. Margarita asked if I would be one of these secondary *madrinas*.

The months leading up to Margarita and David's wedding were a flurry of activity. Guests had to be invited, *padrinos* chosen, two *despedidas* (wedding showers) planned – one by the bride's sister and the other by the groom's mother – and of course the house in which the couple were to live had to be put in order. The financial and time burden did not fall on the two families alone. Weddings are a time for the entire extended family to come together to celebrate and create a union, and to organize and pay for it. At Margarita and David's reception, the new couple thanked nearly twenty *padrinos* and *madrinas* who helped to make possible every aspect of the event, from the rings to the cake. Each godparent role included responsibility for a specific contribution. Responsibilities with smaller financial burdens included providing one of the many ritual items used in the church ceremony itself (rings, the bouquet, bible, coins, rosary, lasso and the cushions on which the couple will kneel during the wedding mass), while larger expenses included the rental of the reception hall, the decorations, musicians, cake, and champagne for the wedding toast. Some of the benefactors were relatives, for instance Margarita's siblings and sisters-in-law all had prominent roles. Others were close friends or friends of the family. In every case, being asked to contribute was an honor, a recognition of a bond with both the newly

established family unit of Margarita and David and with their extended families, to whom the godparent is now a *comadre* or *compadre.*[90]

There is little formalized research on expanded *compadrazgo,* which seems to be primarily a Mexican and Mexican-American phenomenon (Alvarez 2007). While the tradition appears in both urban and rural communities (Kemper 1982 briefly mentions it) and is alive and well among Mexican immigrants in the United States (Jelm & Richman 2010), it is looked down upon by other Latin American immigrant groups (Alvarez 2007) although a similar sort of formal sponsorship does appear in other cultural contexts, for instance at Filipino weddings (M. Goodwin, personal communication).

While multiple-*compadrazgo* serves an economic purpose as a way of dividing up the financial burden of the event, being chosen as a *padrino* is an honor rather than an imposition. The secondary *padrino* or *madrina*'s contribution makes him or her a co-creator of the event and thereby a supporter of the child or young couple. While it goes without saying that the primary godparents are trusted and respected individuals, those who are asked to be secondary *padrinos* and *madrinas* also have an already established relationship with the family as kin (e.g. all of Margarita's siblings and their spouses were members of the wedding party), as neighbors, or long-standing friends.[91] Thus, their selection as *compadres* is as much about recognizing, and perhaps formalizing, an existing relationship as it is about creating a new one.

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[90] In some parts of Latin America these terms are also used informally to refer to a close friend of the same gender.

[91] *Padrinos* may also be researchers who have conducted research in the community over a period of time and formed close bonds with their research assistants or interviewees.

V.2 The Despedida: [92]

The communal effort behind this wedding was reflected in miniature in a tradition of Margarita's family: their own version of the *despedida de solteros* (wedding shower). Wedding showers are a typical component of the pre-wedding events, and the groom's parents were already organizing a large *despedida* to take place shortly before the wedding. In addition, Margarita's sister organized a smaller event composed mainly of the bride's close friends and family, both male and female. This *despedida* was unusual in that a number of the guests were asked in advance to bring a specific gift for the new couple: one of a list of ordinary household items. At the party each guest presented the couple with their present and the hostess described its symbolic significance: a mop and broom (dressed up in fabric as bride and groom) to sweep away arguments and bad feelings; a set of office supplies (pencils to write notes, eraser to remove angry words, glue to mend broken feelings); a pair of knitting needles which, like a new couple, must work as a pair to create the fabric of their life; and so on down the list.

By gifting the couple with the tools for their new home and, symbolically, with the emotional tools to keep their new marriage strong, the guests shared in the task of supporting the new household, much in the same way that the larger community comes together as *padrinos* and *madrinas* to sponsor and to organize the wedding ceremony which will formally transform two adults into one family.

The custom of the symbolic bridal gifts is not unique to Margarita's family; her sister found some of the information online and an Internet search of Spanish language bridal advice web-forums turned up numerous discussions and instructions for this style of themed *despedida,*

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[92] Unlike U.S. bridal showers, which are typically focused on the bride and her female relatives, the *despedida de solteros* ("farewell to being single") is a pre-wedding party for both bride and groom and includes members of both families.

including multiple variations on the lists of gifts and their meanings. Margarita's sister explained to me that this was not a common tradition in San Cristobal, however: she told me that the bride probably suspected what she was planning, but the groom likely had no idea what was in store.

V.3 Choosing Padrinos:

While the role of a godparent is ostensibly that of a religious advisor, choosing *padrinos* involves a lot of strategizing, whether they be the primary godparents who will serve as surrogates if needed, or the secondary members of the party whose role and financial responsibility are much smaller. In a study of urban Mexican communities, Kemper (1982) found that godparents were equally likely to be kin or non-relatives, and there were a variety of reasons why a particular individual or couple would be chosen as godparents for one's child.

Thompson (1973) tied choice of godparentage with attempts at, or opportunities for, economic mobility: middle-class parents tended to choose *padrinos* who were more affluent than they were, while families on both extremes of the spectrum (poor and wealthy) tended toward *padrinos* of their same socioeconomic status, possibly due to less desire or opportunity for social mobility. Asking an employer to be *padrino* to an employee's or servant's child was historically a common practice (Kemper 1982)

In addition to economic considerations, Kemper cited other reasons for choosing a *com(p)adre* including: to formalize and reinforce existing relationships of mutual aid; as an attempt to strengthen obligations of future aid (e.g. from employers who become *padrinos* of their employees' children); to defuse potentially hostile relationships (e.g. among neighbors who have quarreled); and to set up sexual taboos between non-relatives who would otherwise be in intimate proximity by making them de-facto kin (e.g. married neighbors who live in constant

contact with each other or to protect female domestics from the advances of their male employers).[93]

Regardless of the reasoning behind the choice, being a *padrino* or *madrina* is considered an honor, one which is publicly recognized. During the dinner reception, the names of Margarita and David's *padrinos* were announced to the guests, and they were individually called up to dance with the bride or groom. Later on, the new couple was presented with a framed plaque commemorating the event and listing the entire cast of sponsors.

VI. MUTUAL SUPPORT AMONG PROFESSIONAL VENDORS

Another way of constructing relationships of economic and social reciprocity is through the formation of networks based around shared activities. In addition to following the household routines of the entrepreneurial mothers who formed the core of this study, I observed several recruitment and information meetings of an international catalog company, to which I was introduced by one of my participants. This company (which I will dub with the pseudonym Natural Beauty, to maintain participant confidentiality) had a small but growing base within San Cristobal and was at the time offering incentives for vendors who recruited others.

Meetings were held on a semi-regular basis in members' homes. Sometimes they included novices or potential recruits who had been invited by current members; the cases allowed experienced members an opportunity to explain the rules and routines of the company

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[93] While Kemper notes that sexual relations are forbidden between *compadres*, my observations suggest that the primary godparents are more likely to be a married couple, which is in line with the idea that these individuals are intended to serve as surrogates in the event of the parents' death or illness. Additionally, married couples are often asked to jointly take on a single secondary godparent role that could have otherwise been given to one person (e.g. as *padrinos* of the cake). In this case, the couple may be treated as a single *com(p)adre* unit, since they are sharing the financial and social responsibility and will both share the same relationship toward the *hijastro/a* and his/her parents. The restrictions on secondary *padrinos* are less strict, however.

and to attempt to entice the new arrivals into signing up. At other meetings, participants were all experienced vendors, and the focus turned toward examining the latest catalog, sharing information about new products or sales, and discussing vending strategies. In both scenarios, participants framed the purpose of the group as one of mutual support and information-sharing among members (including potential and future novices).

Natural Beauty, like other direct sales companies (which were discussed in further detail in Chapter 1), makes a distinction between the employees who actually work for and are paid by the company itself, and the independent affiliates who earn money through selling catalog merchandise but receive no employment benefits or salary and little formalized training. This vending group was a grassroots construct: its members and organizers were all affiliates, and meetings were held at participants' homes. Those members who were considered to be experts, and to whom the rest of the group deferred or directed their questions, did not have special status in the company itself. They gained their reputation through their vending experience and their diligence in reading, researching, and sharing with others the information that was available to everyone else in the form of training manuals, catalogs, or the company webpage.

Through the course of their meetings and discussions, the participating vendors framed their group as a support network of like-minded entrepreneurs: a team in which all members had the shared goal of promoting what they considered to be a quality product and worked together to the mutual advantage of the group as a whole. On one occasion, Sebastián, one of the few male vendors in the group, recounted how he once showed up to a meeting with a new recruit, to the amazement of a neighbor who had been unable to convince her to join. Anita, the hostess of this meeting, used Sebastián's story as a teaching moment to emphasize the lesson that vendors always help each other, because even your unsuccessful attempt at recruiting may ultimately

make someone more amenable to joining the company down the line. “No hay que no compartir,” she points out. “There's no reason to not share.” Anita then expanded the concept of sharing to include future members: individuals in one’s own social network who could potentially become part of the group:

> Acá, nadie comparte. Yo, (es así) lo que les digo porque, eh, nos ha vendido – a ti te ha vendido, este, no se! ... cualquier producto. Nunca te dice “Oye no quieres participar? No quieres ganarte algo extra? No quie–” no te DICEN.
>
> *Around here, nobody shares. Me, (that's what) I tell them because, um, they've sold to us – they've sold to you, um, I don't know! Some product or other. [The vendor] never says to you “Hey, don't you want to join? Don't you want to earn something extra? Don't you want –” they don't SAY that to you.* [94]

Anita distinguished between the two roles of the vendor: to sell to others, and to invite others to sell on their own. She framed recruitment, the invitation to join, as the sharing of an opportunity and therefore a pro-social act that will benefit one’s friends. Her emphasis is on the obligation to provide this opportunity to others who are interested, rather than on the bonus the vendor will receive if the new recruit signs up.

The topic of helping others, and helping one another is one that repeatedly appears in conversations within this group, especially among the group leaders Anita and Tomás. The topic appeared in quips such as “We're all in the same boat” and terminology such as “weaving of webs” (*tejedora de redes* – a pun since the Spanish word *red* means both a literal web or net as well as a network of people) and “building of larger and larger chains” (a *cadena*, or chain, refers to a series of vendors each of whom was recruited by the previous one.) The novice Nana and her sponsor Sebastián tapped into this ideology of mutual help through their requests for information and support: Nana explaining that she was worried

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[94] Parentheses indicate phrases whose transcription is uncertain. Capitalization indicates speaker emphasis. All quotes in this section come from audio-recordings of meetings held in participants’ homes.

customers would ask her questions she could not answer, and Sebastián explaining that they wanted the group's help, so they could learn through practice ("vamos aprendiendo con la practica").

While Natural Beauty's recruitment system is set up to construct relationships between novice vendors and experienced group leaders, the system is hierarchical, not egalitarian. A vendor receives bonuses for recruiting novices, as well as additional bonuses based on how much those novices sell, but there are no built-in rewards for helping other vendors who are not in one's own chain of recruitment. One would expect this structure to foster competition and an emphasis on customer loyalty. Instead, the members of this Natural Beauty group take the attitude that there are plenty of customers to go around and being able to tap into a strong network of vendors and customers is more important than having a small network all to oneself. The emphasis on network building is made explicit: people have different strengths. Some are good at making sales while others are experts at weaving networks, and these vendors see Natural Beauty as an institution that allows both forms to thrive.

One instance of this framing comes from Tomás, a group leader and one of the most eloquent recruiters. He used an anecdote of a financially well-off woman who did not need to work but decided to become a vendor anyway:

> "Y se dio cuenta que en Natural Beauty hay personas que necesitan el trabajo. Verdad? Y hay personas que no necesitan ofrecer producto. Porque tienen su trabajo, y sensible y sencillamente no le atrae la venta. Entonces, este, pero si - si pueden hacer ese trabajo de? Ayudar a otros mediante invitados."
>
> *"She realized that in Natural Beauty there are people who need work. Right? And there are people who don't need to sell the product. Because they have their work, and the plain truth is they're not attracted to the idea of selling. So, um, but they can – then can work to what? Help others through recruitment."*

Like Anita, Tomás constructed recruitment as an altruistic act that the recruiter performs for others. In addition to an emphasis on mutual advantage and helping other vendors, he framed recruitment as a way of helping members of one's existing networks, turning it into a morally praiseworthy act as well. In the same conversation, he attempted to convince Nana, a new arrival who had been described to him as a skillful networker herself, of the moral value of inviting others:

> Por decir. Tu invitas a - me invitas a mi. [Nana: Mhm] Sabes que yo estoy de la patada, no? Estoy mal económicamente. Este, y - y me dices "(Tomás), mira acá hay un oportunidad." Verdad? "Si gustas ahí está el catalogo. Va ver una reunión, ve a la reunión no pierdes nada." Imagínate, Me ingresas. Y resulta que yo me convierte en un líder (en Natural Beauty). Toda la vida me voy a decir "Gracias Nana. Gracias Nana por ha– por haberme invitado." Verdad? [Nana: Mhm.] Entonces es bueno eso, no? Te ayudas a alguien, y-y llega'ser un líder que se ayude con (los de mas).
>
> *For instance. Suppose you invite – you invite me. [Nana: Uh-huh.] You know I'm broke, right? I'm financially hard up. Um, and, and you tell me "Tomás, look here's an opportunity." Right? "If you want, here's the catalog. Go sit in on a meeting, go to the meeting, you have nothing to lose." Imagine. You enroll me. And it turns out I become a group leader (in Natural Beauty). My whole life I'm going to say "Thank you Nana. Than you Nana for - for having invited me." Right? [Nana: Uh-huh] So that's good, right? You help someone and-and they become a leader who helps (others).*

In their focus on mutual support within the group, and on sharing the opportunities of vending with others in their existing network (thereby bringing these people into the Natural Beauty support network as well), recruiters like Tomás and Anita enact the same ideology of social networks as sources of mutual support and mutual responsibility as we have seen from Doña Rosa's cutting her sister's hair and Doña Inés choosing to remain with Jafra despite its high prices.

VII. STRETCHED TIES: INTERSTATE AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

Up to this point I have used the terms "social networks" and "neighbor networks" almost interchangeably, focusing on how community-level connections can provide access to resources, and also on how having access to valued resources entails a responsibility to make them available to others in the community.

But relationships of emotional and financial support are not geographically limited; they can stretch across state and even national borders, providing family members with financial support (as in the case of remittances, discussed below), access to non-local goods (as in the case of Doña Francisca's Pueblan daughter-in-law, described at the beginning of this chapter) and a network of emotional support and information for other family or friends who have need to travel to that region.

In previous sections I have examined both intra-household sharing of labor and use of extra-household networks as means of giving and receiving local information or resources. In this section, I examine the important of long-distance networks.

Returning to the story of Doña Francisca's children featured at the beginning of this chapter, long-distance networks provide access to resources not available locally, including regional goods, information, and sometimes even job opportunities for young and mobile family members. Shortly after graduating from college, Doña Francisca's daughter spent a summer in Puebla, working part-time and taking care of her nephew. She could never have afforded to live there on her own salary but living with her brother allowed her to contact potential employers and build local networks within that city.

VII.1 Keeping in Touch with Home:

While having connections with people in far away places can be an advantage, those who do the actual travelling also make efforts to keep ties with the people they left back home. Temporary and permanent migrants maintain national and transnational social ties through remittances (Cohen 2011), knowledge transfer (Cohen 2005; Cliggett 2003) and occasional visits when they can afford to do so. Contributing to the perpetuation of these long-distance ties are migrants' perceptions of themselves as still belonging to a home community they may not have seen in years. This sense of community identity may be passed on to second or third generation immigrants who have never set foot in the homeland and who may in fact find the reality of such a visit to be jarring rather than welcoming. In her auto-ethnography of several family reunions, Marcela Ramirez, a second generation Salvadorian-Australian, describes how she felt stronger levels of family bonding when meeting cousins who were themselves immigrants (in Canada, the United States or Nicaragua) than with the extended family in San Salvador. Although tensions in the latter locale were due in part to socioeconomic and cultural differences, they were made more salient by Ramirez's own heightened expectation of El Salvador as the source of her cultural roots and the one place where her family *should* fit in (Ramirez et al 2007).

VII.2 Split Families, Shared Incomes:

The intermingling of emotional with financial duties leads to large scale and long-term flows of income capable of surviving even global financial crises (Ratha & Sirkeci 2010). When I first met Doña María in 2007, she was living alone with her two adolescent children in an unfinished cement house on a small piece of land on the margins of San Cristobal. Several years prior, Doña María's husband had moved north to Tijuana, where he was working as a carpenter, sending money back to his wife so she could manage the construction of their home. Now that

the house was livable, although still incomplete, he had started saving money for the return trip. When I visited the family again in 2008, a carpentry workshop had been added to the back of their home, where Doña María's husband could ply his trade. His wife's small store was still set up in the front room and still sold cans, candy, and groceries to the neighbors.

VII.3 How Important is Geography?

Does it make sense to distinguish between "kin and neighbor networks" and "non-local migrant networks" as being separate entities? Are income and resources brought in by spouses or children living abroad in the same category as those contributed by family members living under the same roof? Or, are they more inherently similar to "external" forms of support from neighbor networks or extended kin? Analyses of household economy have been plagued by the question of what constitutes a household member and the degree to which "household" can be seen as a self-sufficient or self-contained economic unit (Creed 2000; Wilk 1989). It is a globally common phenomenon for family members, both male and female, to travel across the country or internationally to find work that is not available at home. Such individuals still hold strong ties to the households that they left behind: contributing money and gifts; maintaining contact through visits, telephone calls and the Internet (as in the case of Doña Francisca); constructing emotional bonds of membership and identity through sharing family stories and nostalgia with their children (as in Ramirez et al 2007) and even in some cases planning to return back home and take up one's place in the community again (as in the case of Doña María's husband).

Discussions of shared labor and resources that presuppose a distinction between nuclear vs. extended family or between intra- vs. extra-household members are also complicated by cases in which kin ties, geographic placement, and financial (in)dependence do not neatly overlap. Instances include extended relatives who live within the same household and divide

expenses, close kin who live in separate domiciles but share child-rearing responsibilities (e.g. the matrilocal Kumasi market vendors (Clark 1989, 1994) mentioned in Chapter 1), and self-sufficient adult children who fulfill cultural and emotional obligations by contributing money and labor to parents who are not living under the same roof (Jelm & Richman 2010).

Remittances, the money sent by family members working abroad to households "back home" occur on a huge scale internationally, with upwards of $100 billion travelling across borders around the globe, from migrants in one country to their families in another (Cohen 2011). Yet, the long-distance relationship between participants is far more than a one-way flow of money. Gifts and support travel in both directions. When the United States economy dropped in 2009, many hopeful migrants from southern Mexico found themselves temporarily receiving pesos from back home, as they searched for ever more elusive job opportunities in the north (Lacey 2009). On a national level, the percentages of "reverse remittances" from Latin America that year were quite small, coming to only 2% of the amount of money still flowing in the opposite direction (Nye 2009). Yet, on an individual basis, such shifts in fortune can be considerable, as families on both sides of the border depend on each other for economic support and for information.

Relatives abroad can extend one's support network and provide access to information and goods not available at home (even if such information is simply "stay home, there are no jobs here"). Those who do the actual traveling, however, are also at a disadvantage, as they must find or build a new set of local ties to replace the ones they left behind.

Doña María and her husband had another relative (Don Julio) who also worked in construction in Tijuana. Don Julio brought back more than money from his trip north: it was there that he met his young wife Guadalupe. Finding herself on the opposite side of the country

from her own family, Doña Guadalupe was dependent on the networks of husband and in-laws, especially her mother-in-law, Doña Carmen. As a twenty- year-old mother of toddlers, Doña Guadalupe found it hard to make friends with single women her age who had more active social lives; most of her time, she said, was spent with older women or small children.

Doña Guadalupe did not have the resources to visit her family in Tijuana regularly, unlike Doña Francisca, whose economic ties in San Cristobal and in Puebla (as well as the lower cost of travel to central Mexico) allowed her to partly finance her visits through the goods that she brought with her in both directions. Instead, Doña Guadalupe connected with her parents through regular telephone calls. When I first asked to interview her, she seemed eager to compare experiences and childhoods. Unlike most other such discussions with locals who expressed curiosity about my foreign homeland, Guadalupe classified me, as Southern Californian, to be someone from "back home" who could understand the strangeness of buying milk in boxes instead of refrigerated jugs and living in a city where summer weather consists of daily downpours instead of heat waves. She sought to create a local connection through emphasizing our shared status as migrants.

VIII. EPILOGUE

As Doña Francisca, her daughter, and I returned to San Cristobal, our luggage was not much lighter than when we left. We have left behind the food and gifts, but a significant portion of our trip was spent shopping for local merchandise. Our suitcases were filled with new clothing for the whole family, obtained at an outdoor *tianguis* (flea market) that resembled the dim memories from my own childhood in Mexico City: an endless row of covered stalls filled with discount clothes, shoes, jewelry, and cheap plastic toys including the same plethora of tiny plastic Barbie doll accessories.

One of Doña Francisca's sons escorted us to a specialized computer *tianguis,* whose wares included hardware, software and peripherals, such as mice and webcams, as well as stalls of possibly pirated import movies. Here we bought webcams, mice and portable USB drives for the Internet center that Doña Francisca runs out of the front room of her house. Paper holiday decorations and office supplies from a large wholesale *papelería* were packed carefully in a separate box. Doña Francisca's husband had given us a long list of such items; he will use his wife's purchases as samples to show his own customers and later mail-order their requests from the same store. My own contribution to the trip took up no luggage space at all: my digital camera was filled with dozens of pictures of Doña Francisca's family, especially the sole grandson. There were also photos of the *zócalo* (central plaza) downtown with its sculptures, old buildings, and innumerable children and balloon vendors, and of our day trip to the Mayan tunnels and Catholic churches of Cholula. When we arrive back in San Cristobal, I copy these to a CD for Francisca's daughter. She in turn will select her favorites to email back to Puebla and perhaps post a few on her Facebook page as well.

In 2009 when I accompanied Francisca on another such trip, I saw that we were not the only ones transporting merchandise. In an effort to save money and thus, she hoped, be able to visit more often, we found ourselves on a half-price bus line where luggage took up more space than passengers (and sometimes received better treatment). Getting out of the bus at rest stops required climbing over the half a dozen five-foot long bags of acrylic knitting-yarn that filled the aisles. Our single cases of *papelería* samples and our little suitcases seemed very small in

comparison, and I realized that the main difference between a small-scale entrepreneurial mother and a licensed business was simply a matter of scale.[95]

[95] Scale and, of course, business taxes: when one of my interviewee's neighbors alerted the electric company that she was running an internet center in her house, she had to have a separate meter installed for that room or risk being charged the higher commercial rate for her entire household electricity consumption.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study examined the lives of "entrepreneurial mothers": women who balance income and children by engaging in multiple small, self-initiated economic activities that allow them the time and flexibility to care for their families. In environments of economic uncertainty or instability, diversification of resources and reliance upon social and kin networks provide a safety net for families at all socioeconomic levels. However, the ways in which economic strategizing play out in everyday life and their impact on the everyday socialization of young children are topics in need of further research. This study aims to fill in that gap by making use of extended observations of daily routines (both audio and video-recorded), by following families over the course several months and in some cases years, and by looking at how social and economic relationships are linguistically enacted in everyday life through store transactions, mother-child discussions, and narratives about economic decision-making.

Several major conclusions can be made. First, economic diversification and home entrepreneurship are not the last resort of low-income families or of women who have no other job opportunities: San Cristobal mothers chose the activities they engaged in, and several of them reported preferring self-employment as being more reliable, flexible, and interesting than wage labor, thus allowing for greater financial opportunities. Micro-retail in-home stores are ubiquitous in San Cristobal, appearing on nearly every block and providing a highly local clientele of neighbors with single-serving or small quantity goods for immediate use – a single

dose of aspirin, for instance, or a single diaper – and with candies and snacks for immediate consumption.

I.1 Economic Strategizing:

A second major finding is that entrepreneurial mothers are economic strategists: because their enterprises are self-run, they can adjust the amount of time and energy spent on each one, flexibly focus on different projects depending on their profitability, on the amount and type of time available (e.g. using time which must be spent within the house to run the store, or using a family trip to import merchandise), on the economic and emotional needs of their families (e.g. intensifying work to pay for expenses or diminishing it to help out with a family emergency), and even on their own interests. Being self-employed also allows mothers to balance income-earning activities in tandem with childcare, domestic work, and social responsibilities to extended family.

I.2 The Store as a Focal Example:

Chapters 3 and 4 focused on one specific economic activity: the in-home store. While all of the store-owners in this study also engaged in other enterprises, the store itself was chosen as a focal point because of its physical salience in the home (sitting, as it were, right in the front door of the house), its accessibility to child observation, and its relative permanence as an ongoing business whose activities can be easily observed. Additionally, the family store is a relatively stable ongoing activity because it requires little labor and can remain open whenever family members are in the home. Even when it does not provide a large monetary contribution to the household, the low labor investments make it advantageous to leave the store open even when it has relatively little inventory.

Chapter 3 examined the micro-interactional details of the store transactions themselves: how the turn-by-turn structure of the interaction is shaped by the social relationships between the participants, the physical layout of the store as a part of the domestic space, and customers' and vendors' own assumptions about the purpose of the store.

While other cross-cultural studies of commercial transactions argue that service interactions tend to be even more ritualized than social conversations, with more formulaic exchanges and explicit markers of politeness, the structure of store transactions in San Cristobal home businesses are quite truncated in nature – often consisting solely of the request for merchandise and its payment – and frequently lack formal markers of politeness such as greetings or closings. This format contrasts with the nature of social interactions in San Cristobal, in which verbal greetings are frequent and required. I argue that the lack of politeness markers is due to the multiplex relationships between participants, with customers being known neighbors frequently seen on a daily basis, and store transactions being treated as part of an ongoing interaction between participants throughout the day.

I.3 The Role of Children:

Chapter 4 addressed the role of children within and around the store. Observations of store activity over a period of months (and in some cases two years) shows that children do not have regular store responsibilities but instead find ways of inserting themselves into their mother's economic activities through bids to help out or by taking on peripheral responsibilities. This picture of children as peripheral observers and only occasional participants may contrast with expectations of Western lawmaker and child rights advocates but it is in line with cross-cultural studies of home businesses, in which children were rarely a significant source of labor

and parents prioritized children's education and future success as being more important than their immediate economic contributions.

Most of the children's store participation was self-initiated, and they were active observers at a very young age, learning about store routines and social relationships by watching adults interact with customers who are also neighbors. I identified four forms of participation in store activities: attentive observation, bids to help out, notification of customers, and independent tending of the store for short periods of time.

The second part of Chapter 4 illustrated how children display their expertise about the store, and their authority over the store merchandise as a member of the store-owning family, by correcting others (both customers and the vendor herself). Finally, I examined how very young child customers are *ascribed* expertise by others, as older children and adults aid them in communicating their desires and making decisions about what merchandise they wish to consume.

The peripheral role of children in the store is part and parcel of larger family ideologies about shared labor and mutual support. Children are not workers in a family business, they are members of the household and as such are expected to help out when needed, whether that be by taking care of a younger sibling or taking care of a customer.

I.4 Networks and Support:

In Chapter 5 I took a broader perspective, stepping back from the store itself to look at the overarching networks of family, friends, and neighbors that support entrepreneurial mothers economic and social lives. Through vignettes from the lives of various local families, I showed how having a diverse social network provides access to needed resources ranging from cheap

merchandise to loyal customers, and from career advice to babysitting help; and how being part of such a network also involves a responsibility to serve as a resource to others.

Personal networks intertwine financial and emotional obligations, as evidenced by the tradition of multiple *compadrazgo*, where close bonds of fictive kinship are formally recognized through taking on financial responsibility for part of a celebration. Having a long list of *padrinos* and *madrinas* to sponsor a wedding or baptism also creates a sense of community focused around collectively celebrating and creating the milestones of its members.

Finally, the end of Chapter 5 expanded the geographic focus, looking at how these networks can stretch across the country, providing support for traveling relatives, or access to non-local import goods, or emotional resources for those who are away from their families.

II. ECONOMICS AND FAMILY OVER TIME: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Any research project raises as many questions as it answers; one significant question raised by this study is how these patterns of flexibility, balancing, and reciprocating with kin and neighbor networks play out over time. Being an entrepreneurial mother is a balancing act: one must divide one's energies between child-care, housework, and several different economic enterprises. One advantage of economic diversification is the flexibility to shift focus based on one's current needs or interest, thus the routines of entrepreneurial mothers and of their families can be expected to vary over the long term. In the three years of my fieldwork I have seen many such changes, both in the families I followed closely and in those who I knew through interviews and conversations: Doña Angela leased a video game machine for her store and then got rid of it. Doña Reina closed a business while Doña Francisca opened one. Doña Norma added new inventory to her store and Doña Nana added a new business (vending cosmetics by catalog). Doña Elena had a baby; since she had originally opened her store while caring for an infant, the

new arrival served to reinforce rather than to change her economic activities. Doña Francisca, on the other hand, stopped vending almost entirely for several months because she was helping to take care of a sick relative's child. The men in my study experienced such changes as well: Don Carlos switched taxi drivers, and Don Luis handed his business over to his mother-in-law.

Just as businesses develop over time, so do children, and the two influence each other. When I began my research, Doña Elena had two toddlers; by the time I ended she had three. Her youngest, Rosita, has always lived in a house with a tall display of snacks by her front door (which she knows not to touch) and a shifting array of children behind a wooden gate. She has always watched her mother selling to customers and heard her brother calling out "Quieren comprar!" (They want to buy!) upon seeing a new arrival. When she is older, according to Doña Elena, Rosita and her siblings may be helping out with the store themselves. By watching adult activities, children learn not only specific skills but also moral values about priorities and goals. What are the longitudinal effects on children of growing up around home businesses?

Interviews and conversations with adults suggest intriguing possibilities. Doña Francisca's own mother was an entrepreneur and her own daughter sold hand-made jewelry while working toward a college degree. Doña Susi's mother is still selling catalog merchandise and Susi helps her out in between her own activities. Doña Luisa's granddaughter, who does not live with her, nonetheless learns from occasional visits and has entertained the adults by her tendency to give merchandise to customers who visit her grandmother's store.

The support structure created through economic diversification and through the use and maintenance of social networks that provide access to economic and emotional resources is a salient part of everyday life in San Cristobal. Children learn – by watching their mothers balance time and labor between multiple economic projects, create self-run businesses which grow or

shrink, and interact with members of their social networks who are simultaneously neighbors, relatives, and customers – the same sorts of strategies which have been successful for their parents, and the same sorts of priorities about money, work, and what is *parte de la familia* – what responsibilities are "part of being family." Data collection and observation for this study spanned across three years, but that is only a small part of a lifetime: what sort of decisions will little Rosita make about labor, education and family responsibilities as she becomes older? How will watching her mother package candies, clean house, and make crafts affect the way she will choose to balance her own children, income, and personal projects when she becomes a mother herself?

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