GENDER, THE HOUSEHOLD AND MIGRATION: A CASE STUDY OF MIGRATION FROM GUADALAJARA, MEXICO, TO THE UNITED STATES

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This thesis explores the interaction of gender with the social process of migration. The context is the migration flow from the city of Guadalajara, in the traditional Mexican migrant-sending state of Jalisco, to the United States. The thesis addresses a specific conceptual gap in the literature by analysing gender theoretically as an integral part of the migration process. The urban location of the research project also adds to the originality of the thesis in that empirical investigations of migration from Mexican cities are scarce, despite the fact that the increasingly urban background of Mexican migrants in the US has been noted in the literature. Following a critical overview of conventional theories of migration, a gendered household approach is proposed as a conceptual framework to assess the role of gender in migration and to combine the micro- and macro-levels of analysis. This approach is elaborated through a discussion of important debates in feminist discourses. Primary data were obtained using a multiple methodology combining quantitative and qualitative field techniques. A random survey conducted in three working class communities in Guadalajara produced 175 completed questionnaires, which were complemented by 58 semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the data is structured around three overlapping themes, focusing on the household in the sending community; the act of migration itself; and the experiences of migrants at their destination. Among the major conclusions is that the migration process is characterised by differentiation at every stage, and that this differentiation occurs both within and between households. Gender is an important influence on how migration is experienced, but women too are differentiated in their engagement with it. Moreover, the diversity of the migration process is structured not only by gender but also by several other factors and their interactions. These influential factors operate at the individual, household and societal levels. It is argued that the gendered household approach best takes account of all three in a more holistic analysis of migration.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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He was twenty years old, just back from nine months in el norte, working the potato fields in Idaho and the citrus in Arizona, and he was like a god in Topoztlán.

The sidewalks weren't crowded, not in the way she'd expected, not like in the market in Cuerna vaca or even Tepoztlán, but there was a steady flow of people going about their business as if it were the most natural thing in the world to live there.

Excerpts from T. Coraghessan Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain*
Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Aims and objectives

My thesis is that gender is a central part of the social process of migration. I have two overall aims which I hope to accomplish in this thesis. The first is to explore the two-way interaction between gender and the migration process. The second is to incorporate ideas from feminist theories into a conceptual approach to migration that fully includes gender in its analysis and at the same time strikes a balance between individual/voluntaristic and structural/deterministic frameworks. I view questions about gender not as additive components but as integral parts in the analysis of any social process, including migration. Thus while I focus here on migration, I attempt to broaden the conceptual relevance of the thesis outside migration studies by drawing on themes current in feminisms, anthropology and sociology.

My concrete objectives in the thesis are three-fold. The first is to demonstrate that conventional theories of migration neglect gender and to elaborate what I term the gendered household approach as an alternative and more holistic means of investigating the process of migration in a way that explicitly takes account of gender. The second is to use this conceptual framework to analyse the patterns and processes of migration as they are interlinked with gender in an empirical case study. The third is to illustrate the important contribution which the gendered household approach can make to contemporary migration theory, and to other fields of social science concerned with the role of gender in social processes.

I chose to pursue these objectives in the context of the international migration flow from Mexico - specifically the city of Guadalajara - to the US. This flow has a well-established historical tradition at the macro-level. The urban setting of the research project also adds to the originality of the thesis in that empirical investigations of migration from Mexican cities are scarce, despite the fact that the increasingly urban background of Mexican migrants in the US has been noted in the literature.
1.2 The migration context

Migration has always occurred, but ‘international migration has never been as pervasive, nor as socioeconomically and politically significant, as it is today’ (Castles and Miller, 1993:260). In a global context, migration is thus an extremely topical issue. Migration may also be seen as becoming increasingly diverse. It has been suggested that the first phase in global migration was that of deliberately recruited migrant labour, which was followed by a second phase of family reunification migration (King, 1996). According to this schema, we are now witnessing a third, post-industrial wave of migration which is much more varied than previous phases. A whole plethora of migrant ‘types’ are now defined, including highly skilled migrants, asylum seekers, clandestine migrants and ‘migrants of consumption’, who can otherwise be described as ‘migrants of choice’, for example those people who migrate for working holidays, leisure trips, study and retirement. At the same time, there is a counter-argument that it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between the various migrant ‘types’ (Gould and Findlay, 1994). In the context of this debate, my focus here is on the broad category of ‘voluntary’ migrants (although ‘voluntary’ migrations may also embody some elements of necessity), rather than for example on refugees or asylum seekers. This category of voluntary migrants would typically include both ‘economic’ and ‘family’ migrants, although later in the thesis I question the validity of assigning migrants to such discrete categories.

It has been stated, in terms of ‘the convergence hypothesis’, that there is a growing similarity among industrialised, labour-importing countries in terms of the immigration policies adopted, the results of these policies, the social integration policies instituted, and general public reactions to immigrant flows and government policy towards immigration (Cornelius et al., 1994). The political response to immigration has largely consisted of policy initiatives aimed at controlling and reducing immigration, both responding to and moulding anti-immigrant attitudes amongst sections of the general public in countries of immigration. Despite the more restrictive migration policies adopted in most ‘developed world’ countries, both legal and undocumented migration have generally continued to rise (Gould and Findlay, 1994). In other words there is a distinct gap between the goals and the outcome of national immigration policy (Cornelius et al., 1994). This gap has fuelled further anti-immigrant sentiments and perpetuated the increasingly restrictive immigration-policy cycle.
Immigration is intimately linked to other contemporary issues high on the political agenda. Economically, most industrial democracies are unable to provide adequate employment for existing populations of low-skilled citizen and resident foreign workers, making the immigration of unskilled workers highly controversial (Castles and Miller, 1993), even if individual employers and the economy in general obtain a net benefit from such immigration. The public in many 'developed world' societies increasingly believe that too many immigrants will disrupt the culture, economy and the level of public service provision in the welfare state. The issue of the 'burden' of immigrants on the taxpayer has been characterised as a contemporary expression of nativism (Calavita, 1996). 'Developed world' politicians are often willing to make political capital out of the 'immigration problem' by preying on the public's fears and prejudices and to use immigrants as a scapegoat for the problems of society at large (King, 1996).

The new restrictions implemented in many 'developed' countries place particular emphasis on the most feared migrant - the undocumented or 'illegal' migrant. Undocumented immigrants are by definition the product of legislation that aims to control migration (Castles and Miller, 1993). The 'illegal immigrant' has become a social symbol for immigrants who supposedly abuse the welfare state (through laying claim to social security, housing, education and health care), commit crimes and jeopardise the employment of legitimate citizens (Gans, 1995). Moreover, even if foreign workers and their dependants are not 'illegal' immigrants, they are often unwanted because of a low tolerance of cultural, racial and ethnic diversity and a fear of crime (Cornelius et al., 1994). Such a situation leads to inflationary estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants and reinforces the tendency of national governments to formulate policies to 'control' (ie. reduce) immigration. Yet the exaggerated estimates and the behaviour associated with undocumented immigrants are not supported by empirical evidence (Espenshade, 1995; Passel, 1994; Zolberg, 1993).

1 I should like to stress here that the term 'illegal immigrant' is a socio-political construction. It carries hints of criminality and has also taken on the negative connotations discussed above, but in itself means only that a migrant's presence in a destination country does not conform with that country's (often fluctuating) immigration policies. From this point on I shall use the term undocumented (im)migrant to refer to such people to avoid invoking the negative associations of the term 'illegal immigrant'.

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Migration is not an isolated phenomenon: movements of commodities and capital almost always give rise to movements of people (Castles and Miller, 1993). These authors have argued that:

new forms of global migration and growing ethnic diversity are related to fundamental transformations in economic, social and political structures in this post-modern and post-Cold War epoch.
(Castles and Miller, 1993:1)

This is particularly pertinent in the US-Mexico case following the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Although the dynamic of migration between these two countries is already firmly established, it is likely to be reinforced by increasing economic interaction between Mexico and the US. Even before NAFTA, the US and Mexico shared the most extensive and complex network of linkages of any pair of countries located on opposing sides of the ‘North/South’ divide - they conducted the most trade, exchanged the greatest amount of currency, and shared the longest contiguous border (2,000 miles), over which the most border crossings and border commerce (both legal and otherwise) occurred (Bustamante et al., 1992). It seems likely that the effects of NAFTA will be to increase the intensity of this interchange. This particular migration flow is also in the global spotlight because (undocumented) immigration is increasingly becoming an electoral issue in the US. Given that the states most affected by undocumented immigration include those with the greatest concentrations of Mexican immigrant populations, the issue of illegal immigration in the US is closely bound up with Mexican migration.

The geographical focus of this thesis is the migration flow from Mexico to the US, including the return flow of Mexicans, set against the more general background of a growing concern globally about migration flows and immigration issues. In the thesis I use the terms ‘migration’ and ‘international migration’ to refer to this movement between Mexico and the US unless otherwise specified, although I would not wish to suggest that this is the only migration flow in a region which could in fact be classified as part of a

2 According to Wayne Cornelius et al. (1994) 81 per cent of the 3.2 million undocumented immigrants estimated by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) to be in the US in 1992 were in the states of California, Texas, New York, Illinois and Florida. A recent study for the Centre of Immigration Studies in Washington suggests that 64 per cent of all immigrants were concentrated in the top four immigrant states of California, New York, Florida and Texas in 1994 (CISNEWS mailing of 20/2/96 - CISNEWS is an electronic information service on global immigration issues run by the Centre for Immigration Studies in Washington [CISNEWS@cis.org]).
complex migration system. The US receives immigrants not just from Mexico but from all over the world, and from the 1970s particularly from East and Southeast Asia and from Central America and the Caribbean (Zlotnik, 1996). Mexico itself receives migrants and refugees from Central and South America, many of whom are trans-migrants *en route* to Canada and the US (see Casillas, 1996). Neither should US immigrants to Mexico, especially business people and the retired, be overlooked. There are also of course considerable amounts of internal migration within both Mexico and the US. Although I am aware of these other migration flows, the specific focus of my thesis is the international migration flow of Mexicans between Mexico and the US.

Migration between Mexico and the US has received much attention both academically and politically, in line with the generalised global concern about migration described above. Again echoing more widespread trends, this attention is however largely directed towards the evaluation and formulation of immigration policy. Similarly, while immigration is also becoming a topic of mainstream public interest, a sensationalist stance, fed by the media and by politicians, is often adopted. These perspectives can obscure what the reality of migration means for the people involved. This thesis aims to address that reality.

1.3 Gender and migration

The extent of women’s involvement in international migration has in the past generally been overlooked, mainly because women have been viewed as ‘dependants’, moving as wives, mothers or daughters of male migrants. Such stereotypes are evident in the statistical systems used to measure migration and have pervaded the study of international migration (Zlotnik, 1995). Yet women have played an important economic and demographic role in most contemporary migrations throughout the world (Campani, 1994; Morokvašić, 1983, 1995, Schwartz-Seller, 1981). Consonant with recent interest in gender issues in most fields of the social sciences, migration studies have now come to recognise the involvement of women with migration. Some recent estimates suggest that women in the 1990s constitute almost half the international immigrant population. Data from the 1980 round of censuses, available for 157 of the 208 countries constituting the world at that time, indicate that 48 per cent of the 78 million persons enumerated outside their country of birth (or citizenship) were women (United Nations Secretariat, 1995).
Moreover, in three-quarters of the countries considered, women accounted for at least 44 per cent of the foreign-born population (Zlotnik, 1992b). Indeed, it has been argued that female migrants significantly outnumber male migrants, although this has been disputed (Zlotnik, 1995).

The emergence in the 1970s of literature on migrant women can be seen as a result of three circumstances. The first was a discontinuation of temporary labour migrant recruitment policies from around 1974 onwards, leading to a quantitative increase in the migration of women for reunification with earlier, male, labour migrants. The second was a recognition of migrant women as economically important. A demand for immigrant female labour has developed and it has been argued that at a macro-level of analysis, the work of immigrant women in the 1980s and the 1990s accords with the logic of a society undergoing profound changes, both economically and socially. In other words, women immigrants are not marginal economic and social subjects but economic and social actors (Campani, 1995). The third was the beginning of a wider feminist awareness and questioning of women’s role in society (Morokvašic, 1993).

Yet while these conditions would seem to be progressive in terms of the conceptualisation of women’s participation in migration, some important drawbacks remain. The most important is that focusing on female labour migrants has often meant that migrant women who do not participate in the labour market continue to be ignored or defined as passive dependants or secondary migrants. The significance of this is reinforced by the fact that a majority of women who migrate internationally, especially those who migrate legally from ‘developing’ to ‘developed’ countries, do not do so for work purposes (Zlotnik, 1995). I will also argue later that women migrants who do have paid work at their destination may continue to be overlooked if they did not originally migrate as labour migrants. Thus, despite the recognition that women as well as men are migrants, migration theory has generally failed to incorporate fully the role of gender. The implicit assumption is that patterns of female migration are likely to mirror male migration, even though gender-related differences in the migration process suggest the need for a specific analysis of female migration (Thadani and Todaro, 1984).
... the migration of women is closely interrelated to that of men, particularly in contexts where migration law or regulations favour the selection of migrants on the basis of family ties. Yet, because women's roles differ from those of men and often vary between the society of origin and that of destination, the factors leading to female migration and those conditioning its outcomes are likely to differ from those involved in the case of migrant men. (Zlotnik, 1995:230)

Thus gender influences both participation in migration and the experience of immigration at the destination. It has been claimed that migrant women are most affected by the discriminatory nature of policies aimed at immigrant/minority populations, or by their implementation (Morokvašić, 1993). This is not because these policies are directly sexist in their intentions, but because women, as a result of other forms of gender stratification, are more likely to fall into those categories of persons most disadvantaged by these policies. For instance, those who join spouses through family reunification, those who are made redundant in the process of economic restructuring and those who work as unpaid labour in family businesses are often negatively affected by immigration and/or minority policies and these same groups are generally female-dominated (ibid.). It has been argued that:

the position of immigrant/minority women in industrialised 'developed' societies is determined by the articulation of the different power relationships in which these women take part, the most important being gender and class relationships and immigrant/minority women's relation to the nation-state as immigrant, foreigner or ethnic minority. (Morokvašić, 1993:465)

While it is important to recognise the obstacles that immigrant women may encounter, it is equally important to challenge the persistent trend to portray migrants, particularly female migrants, as 'victims' of structure, culture or fate (Ålund, 1988). Immigrant women may develop various forms of resistance in their relationship with their partners, in coping with racism, or in trying to improve their situation in the labour market (Morokvašić, 1993). They may also contribute to new forms of solidarity and become agents of cooperation beyond the boundaries of their own group (Bhachu, 1991; Morokvašić, 1991).

3 While immigrant women may be portrayed as the ultimate 'victims', a general tendency to emphasise the negative aspects of all migration has been noted. It has been argued that migrants are (too) often viewed as marginal, desperate people, defined only in terms of their difference from host societies as falsely-homogenised 'others' (King, 1996).
Turning now to the specific context of my research, the US is the country admitting the largest number of immigrants in the world, and is perhaps unique in having admitted more women than men as permanent legal immigrants in the period from 1930 to 1980 (Houston et al., 1984). This trend has been attributed to the key role of family reunification criteria in the selection of immigrants during this period (ibid.). Most legal female immigrants enter the US as spouses or dependants of male migrants - though their mode of entry does not imply that they constitute a lesser source of potential labour than do men (Boyd, 1996). The 1980s witnessed three important changes in immigration to the US (Zlotnik, 1995). Firstly, the high predominance of immigrants from developing countries became established. Secondly, the level of legal immigration continued to rise, mainly because of the increasing numbers of people admitted as immediate relatives of US citizens. Thirdly, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) introduced in 1986 eventually legalised more than two million undocumented migrants, most of whom were from ‘developing’ countries (ibid.).

With regard to Mexican migration to the US, there are indications that while Mexican women have migrated to the US as long as men have, the numbers doing so have increased since the 1980s, in other words since the changes identified above (Bean et al., 1990, Cornelius, 1991; Woodrow and Passel, 1990). Yet as with studies of gender and migration in general, there have been few serious attempts to include gender in the conceptual analysis of Mexican migration to the US. In this thesis I attempt to address the role of gender in the migration process, not just in terms of the participation of women in migration, but also with regard to the effects of migration on women, on the relations between women and men, and on society. To achieve this I use a gendered household approach to incorporate both micro- and macro-levels of analysis, which are necessary but, taken separately, insufficient explanations of migration. The gendered household approach I adopt in the thesis is developed from a reading of feminist literature which argues that the household needs to be conceptually deconstructed to make the individuals within it visible. My thesis is thus directed towards filling a specific gap in the literature: that of migration studies which explicitly incorporate gender.
1.4 ‘Traditional’ and urban migration from Mexico

While traditionally Mexican migrants to the US were from rural communities, an increasing proportion of contemporary migrants have an urban background (Cornelius, 1990a, 1991). New source areas, including urban conglomerations like Mexico City, have been described as coming ‘on stream’ and it has been suggested that soon the majority of (first-time) Mexican migrants to the US will be of urban origin (Cornelius, 1990a). Although it is only recently that this issue has been more widely acknowledged, the fact that Mexican migrants in the US come from urban as well as rural areas has been recognised for some time (e.g. Alba-Hernández, 1976). The Encuesta Nacional de Emigración a la Frontera Norte y a los Estados Unidos (ENEFNEU) survey conducted in 1978-1979 by the Mexican government institute Centro Nacional de Información y Estadísticas del Trabajo (CENIET) showed for instance that 22 per cent of migrants came from urban areas, in other words centres of population with 15,000 or more inhabitants (Zazueta and Corona, 1979). Despite this, relatively few studies have examined migration to the US from urban areas. There is thus a clear need for urban-based studies of migration to establish its extent and to explore its effects, just as previous studies have done for rural areas (Verduzco, 1990).

It is not clear why urban source areas of migration have been overlooked as areas of study. The rural bias in academic studies of sending communities may reflect the degree to which the stereotype of the Mexican migrant as a (male) landless agricultural labourer or a poor small-scale farmer in need of capital to develop his land has become entrenched. It may also be because of the recent emphasis in migration studies generally on receiving societies and their immigration and integration policies rather than on sending societies. In the Mexico-US context, the recent introduction of NAFTA may also have helped turn attention to the macro-economic level and the links between migration and globalisation, and away from smaller-scale studies of individual migrant-sending communities. Whatever the reason, the lack of studies of Mexican migration from the perspective of urban sending areas seems to me to represent a significant research gap, especially since the urban background of an increasing proportion of Mexican migrants to the US has been recognised in the literature (e.g. Cornelius, 1990a, 1991; López, 1990; Verduzco, 1986).
It has long been recognised that certain Mexican states, mostly in the west or *occidente* and especially Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán and Zacatecas, have a history of being migrant-sending areas, together accounting for a high proportion of all Mexican migrants to the US (Bustamante, 1984; Massey *et al.*, 1987). For most of this century, about eight Mexican states have accounted for the majority of migrants to California, but these eight have not always been the same. The four states named above have however always ranked among the top sending states, and hence can be called ‘traditional sending states’ (Jones, 1984). Within these states, it is largely rural and semi-urban areas, in other words settlements with fewer than 15,000 inhabitants, which usually have been considered as the source of most of the migration flow (Arroyo *et al.*, 1991; Dagdag, 1975).

It has been suggested that 37 per cent of all Mexican migrants to the US in 1984 were from the *occidente* of Mexico, although this figure represents a substantial fall since 1973, when the corresponding proportion was 69 per cent (Arroyo *et al.*, 1991). This diversification of migrant origins is evident from other sources. For instance, while the two states of Jalisco and Michoacán together accounted for 47 per cent of undocumented Mexican migrants apprehended in the San Diego area in 1973 (Dagdag, 1975), the same two states accounted for only 29 per cent of those apprehended in 1987 (Cornelius, 1991). The latter author, in a survey of both legal and undocumented immigrants working in Californian firms in 1987-1988, found that 27 of Mexico’s 32 states were represented amongst those surveyed, although by far the largest proportion - 38 per cent - had lived in Jalisco or Michoacán just before their migration (*ibid.*). Thus while new source areas may be identified, ‘traditional’ sources have not been displaced from the migration flow. Within the principal sending states, moreover, US migration does not appear to have become less geographically concentrated, with the bulk of undocumented migrants continuing to originate from a relatively small number of *municipios* (*ibid.*).

According to a range of sources, undocumented migrants from Jalisco have represented between 10 and 25 per cent of the total flow since 1926 (Arroyo *et al.*, 1991; Dagdag, 1975; Gamio, 1930, repr. 1971; Winnie and De León, 1987). The Zapata Canyon Project, based on a continuous random survey of undocumented migrants at five border-crossing points between 1987 and 1995, showed that more than 12 per cent of the migrants surveyed at Tijuana were from Jalisco (Bustamante, 1995). I saw Guadalajara, the capital of this ‘traditional sending state’, as a likely source of the urban-based migrants recently
commented upon. The little work which exists in this area supports this assumption. Agustín Escobar and Olivia Martínez (1990) for instance found that US migration was quite common among manual workers in Guadalajara (17 per cent of those in their sample had worked in the US) and still more usual for workers in small firms (up to 25 per cent). Surveys undertaken by Agustín Escobar and Mercedes González de la Rocha in Guadalajara between 1982 and 1987 suggested that around a quarter of households had immediate kin in the US (Cornelius, 1991). In 1982 Massey and his colleagues sampled a working class area of Guadalajara and found that 32 per cent of households had members who had migrated to the US at some point (Massey et al., 1987). I therefore chose Guadalajara, representing a combination of the ‘traditional’ and the urban, as a suitable location for my research project.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis is directed towards filling two gaps in the literature. The first of these is in empirical studies of migration from urban areas, the second in migration studies which explicitly address gender. Since my empirical research was located in an urban migrant-sending area, the thesis attempts to make some contribution to filling the former gap. In relation to the second gap, I set out in Chapter Two a conceptual framework of the household as a means of analysing gender in migration studies. I argue that what I term the gendered household approach represents a particularly appropriate way forward in migration studies, as one of the major criticisms of most migration theories is of their inability to include both micro- and macro-level factors. In contrast, one of the major strengths of household approaches which has been highlighted in the literature is their ability to do just that. I suggest in this chapter that migration theory has thus far brought us to the notion of household strategies, and argue that as a result of critiques of this approach which have been expressed, the household approach needs to go beyond this. As well as underlining how the gendered household approach engenders both individual and societal factors in migration, I emphasise through the discussion in this chapter how it addresses not just migration but also issues central to feminist work as a whole.

In Chapter Three I discuss how the gendered household approach was operationalised in the field. A major concern in this chapter is to connect theory with practice. The chapter has four main sections. In the first I describe the definitions employed in the field, and
explain how they were influenced by the conceptual framework adopted. In the second I discuss the methodology of multiple strategies and its rationale. The third constitutes the ‘method’, in which I detail what took place in the field in terms of sampling, the questionnaire survey and the semi-structured interviews. In the fourth I present a brief assessment of my role as researcher in the fieldwork setting, and of how I feel my presence and my particular (perceived) persona affected the outcome of the research.

In Chapter Four I depict the context of the case study at several levels. At the macro-level, I present an overview of the historical tradition of migration from Mexico to the US, including some recent estimates of the numerical significance of this phenomenon. I then present a brief history and description of Guadalajara to give an impression of some of the characteristics of the city in which my research was located. At the level of the study communities, I offer in this chapter a short profile of each, attempting to give both a general overview and some factual data on the people who live in these communities. I go on to give some basic facts about the occurrence of migration from the study communities to the US, both to establish its significance and to derive some indication of its general characteristics. At the household level, migrant and non-migrant households, as defined for the purposes of the research project, are compared and contrasted.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven constitute the main body of the thesis in terms of its empirical content. I combine the quantitative and qualitative data gathered during the fieldwork period around the themes of these chapters. The focus is two-fold. Firstly, I emphasise major patterns of the migration flow, especially in relation to existing literature on the subject. Secondly, I attempt to portray and to evaluate what migration means to the individuals who collectively form these patterns, in order to produce a more migrant-centred analysis. I have structured these three chapters around three phases of the migration process. The first involves the migrant household in the sending area, the second the migration itself, including motivations for migration and movement across the border in both directions, and the third turns to the immigrant experience in the US. At each stage my focus is on gender, but I also explore other influential factors as appropriate.

In Chapter Five I explore the migration process in terms of the household in the sending communities. The major theme of this chapter is that of differentiation both within and
between households. This theme emerges through the investigation of three aspects of migrant households. These are: firstly, the process of decision-making; secondly, the economic and non-economic impacts of the migration of one or more household members on the household in the sending area; and thirdly, the construct of 'the' household in migration. In Chapter Six I move on to look at the experience of migration itself, and how this experience is gendered throughout, in motivations, in border crossings and in return. This gendering occurs as a result of factors operating at the individual, household and societal levels. The theme of differentiation is again apparent, in that the migration experience is seen to vary not just between women and men but also amongst women and amongst men. This issue of diversity is the explicit focus of the following chapter, Chapter Seven, in which I turn to the experience of Mexican immigrants, particularly women, in the US. In evaluating the experience of (women) immigrants both inside and outside the labour market, I argue in this chapter that the use of a single category such as 'gender' in the interpretation of the social process of migration is insufficient. I suggest that a more rounded analysis requires recognition that migrants are individuals possessing specific attributes and influenced by particular circumstances at the individual, household and societal levels.

I conclude in Chapter Eight by drawing together the most important findings and themes of the thesis, emphasising in particular the role of gender and the significance of differentiation in all aspects of migration. I then go on to reflect on some of the implications raised by the exploration of the interactions between gender, the household and migration which I pursue in the thesis. I discuss the broader applicability of the thesis and finish by posing some suggestions for future research.
Chapter Two: Towards a gendered household approach in migration studies

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I elaborate the *gendered household approach* which is used in the thesis to analyse the migration flow from Guadalajara to the US as a gendered social process. The increasing feminisation of many international migration flows is becoming more widely recognised in migration studies (Bilac, 1995; Castles and Miller, 1993), and yet, it is argued, current theory inadequately addresses the role of gender in the migration process (Morokvasic, 1983; Thadani and Todaro, 1984). This oversight goes beyond a lack of attention paid to female migrants; gender is influential in determining the specific outcome of migration at every stage, whether women themselves are migrants or not, and yet its influence is frequently ignored or underestimated. Recent case studies suggest that gender is a major organising principle in the structuring of population flows and of their causes and results (Chant, 1992b). It is therefore crucial that a theoretical perspective to analyse the role of gender in migration be developed further.

The study of migration is a wide-ranging one, and theoretical frameworks address different aspects of the migration process. Perhaps the clearest division is between those frameworks which aim to explain the root causes that initiate migration, and those which attempt to explain its perpetuation. The *gendered household approach* developed in this chapter falls amongst the latter, its main goal being to examine the way gender structures the participation and experiences of individuals in the migration flow.

In the first section of this chapter I present a critical overview of a number of theoretical approaches, with the aim of assessing their potential to incorporate a conceptual view of migration as a gendered social process. I conclude that traditional theories of migration do not and can not analyse gender as an integral part of the migration process. It has been suggested that a ‘household strategies’ approach offers the most promising avenue for the investigation of gender and migration (Chant and Radcliffe, 1992). In the second section of the chapter I thus discuss ‘the household’ and the concept of a ‘household strategy’. I also look at the feminist critique of household studies. The focus of the argument in this section is more general than migration studies, because these issues have come under much
debate in the broader literature, and hence must be situated in this context. The study of migration as a gendered process can thus be located in a wide-ranging context which takes on board some of the issues central to feminist work in general. In the final section of the chapter I describe the gendered household approach that I adopt in this thesis.

The use of a household approach in the thesis is not meant to imply that such a framework represents the definitive approach to migration. In fact I suggest that the household approach could be productively combined with other modes of explanation and analysis. I argue however that if the household is deconstructed to expose internal differentiation, it represents a progressive framework for a gender-aware study of the migration process and hence has a specific advantage over previous approaches to migration which have been largely gender-blind. The household approach also enables migration to be evaluated alongside other important topics in feminist research. This allows migration to be conceptualised as one aspect of a complex social reality, rather than as a one-dimensional and self-contained phenomenon. Further, the household can be conceptualised as the point of convergence of micro-scale individual factors and macro-scale structural, social and ideological variables, and hence can avoid the problems associated with applying these analytical perspectives separately.

2.2 Theoretical approaches to migration

Conventional approaches to the theorisation of migration have tended to fall under the two broad headings of ‘individualistic’ or ‘micro’ and ‘structural’ or ‘macro’. Both have attempted to explain the reasons for the initiation, or the root causes, of migration flows. The main distinction between the two is that between:

- approaches which aim at generalisations based on quantitative analysis from large numbers of individual cases, and more collectivist and institutional approaches which seek to examine migrations within the historical context of an emerging global economy. (Castles and Miller, 1993:19)

It has been suggested that:

- the ideological opposition between these approaches has become reified into an unproductive polarisation of the literature, sustaining an artificial separation between macro- and micro-scales of analysis. (Goss and Lindquist, 1995: 318)
More recently, in reaction to this conceptual division, alternative models have been developed which attempt to link both individual and structural factors in a single analysis. Three main groups of such models may be identified. All three tend to focus on the perpetuation of migration rather than root cause explanations. The first group includes what have been termed 'integrative approaches', such as the systems theory and the social networks of migration approach (Goss and Lindquist, 1995). The second type of model, increasingly referred to as 'the structuration model', emphasises the complex interaction between social structure and human agency (Wright, 1995). A third means of linking the micro-scale with the macro-scale is the household strategies model, which depicts household behaviour as a response to structural factors external to the household. My aim in this section is to summarise each of these strands of thought, both conventional and alternative, highlighting particularly their strengths and weaknesses with regard to the incorporation of gender as an intrinsic variable in migration.

2.2.1 Individualistic or micro approaches

a) The micro-theory of neo-classical economics

The traditional individualistic approach is based on the notion of rational economic man responding in a calculated fashion to his circumstances in order to ensure maximum returns on his labour. I use the word 'man' deliberately here, as this theory implicitly assumes the migrant is a male actor, with any female migration passive and secondary. International migration is conceptualised in this view as a form of investment in human capital, with prospective migrants making a cost-benefit calculation before deciding whether or not to migrate (Massey et al., 1993). The migration decision is usually framed in the neo-classical economic context discussed below, and an assumption of rational choice, following a considered evaluation of options available, is implicit in most such theories of motivation (Goss and Lindquist, 1995; Richmond, 1994). Often termed the push-pull model, it is constructed around 'factors of expulsion' (economic, social and political hardships in the poorest regions) and 'factors of attraction' (comparative economic advantages in the wealthier areas) (Portes, 1987, 1991). According to the neo-classical model, the major factor explaining migration between two countries is the binational wage gap (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Massey and Espinosa, 1996).
Economic disparities between rich and poor countries are clearly influential in determining migration. One of the major problems with this approach however is that it offers no insight into the structural factors and changes initially causing migration, or the organising processes sustaining the migration once initiated (Cohen, 1987; Skeldon, 1990; Wood, 1981). Moreover, it concentrates on an unrealistic vision of individual rational calculus, evaluating the migration decision as part of an economic cost-benefit calculation. This ignores the role of personal characteristics in affecting the probability of movement by determining other potential benefits of migration, such as occupational status, working conditions and the prospects of job mobility (Massey and Espinosa, 1996).

It is this model, argues Sylvia Pedraza (1991), which has been largely responsible for the creation of the 'migrant stereotype', where the international migrant is viewed as synonymous with the male (single or married) labour migrant attempting to maximise his returns by working abroad before returning to the home country with his savings. This perspective denies women any active role in the migration process. As noted above, female migrants are seen as passive followers of the male migrant. Female dominated movements are described as secondary flows generated by the original male-dominated migration flow (Böhning, 1974; Houston et al., 1984). While this developmental trajectory of family-stage migration may be relevant in some cases, a focus only on the (male) migrant ignores the important role women often have in actively facilitating male migration by single-handedly managing the family/household/farm during the migrant’s absence (Dandler and Medeiros, 1988). Where women are themselves migrants, it has been suggested that their migration decisions and experiences are commonly more closely tied than are those of men to family structures, and hence their behaviour cannot be fully explained as the product of individual decisions guided by purely economic motives (Bilac, 1995).

At the global level, women are becoming increasingly active as migrants themselves (Bilac, 1995; Castles and Miller, 1993; Stalker, 1994). The neo-classical approach has been used to analyse female migration, but it has also met with criticism, largely based on three grounds. First, it does not address adequately the fact that women are not a homogenous group. Second, it fails to consider the social factors which condition participation in migration flows, particularly those influencing the relative share of men and women in labour markets at the place of origin and destination. Third, it tends to treat
women as a ‘special’ group whose migration needs to be explained, whereas male migration is seen as unproblematic and reducible to wage differentials (Chant and Radcliffe, 1992).

b) The micro-theory of migrant decision-making or the behavioural approach

Social psychologists have developed more complex explanations of the migration decision at the micro-level, although in general much less work has been done in this area. A central tenet of the behavioural approach is that decision-making has its roots in the behavioural environment rather than in the phenomenal environment\(^1\). In the context of migration, the individual’s perceptions of conditions at the origin and destination of the potential migrant are thus more important according to this framework than the actual characteristics of the areas. The behavioural approach to migration has emphasised such issues as information gathering and destination selection. It attempts to:

> explain migration within the context of psychological decision-making processes and is concerned with how individuals choose between alternatives. Concepts such as place utility and the perception and evaluation of potential destinations are thus subsumed within the general framework of choice behaviour developed by psychologists.

(Cadwallader, 1992:4)

Gordon De Jong and James Fawcett (1981) for instance, attempt to identify the factors involved in the migration decision, distinguishing several different phases in the decision-making process. The incentives, motives, availability and expectations of migration which constitute the individual decision-making process can also be linked through this perspective to family, socio-cultural and environmental variables (Harbison, 1981). Behavioural models are thus theoretically richer than the orthodox economic model described above. Yet it has been suggested that research on the social psychological determinants of migration has tended to generate a model which is appropriate only in a limited set of circumstances, namely those in which individuals have strong control over the factors associated with their migration decision (Simmons, 1985-6). Furthermore:

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1 The phenomenal environment refers here to the objective physical environment in which behaviour takes place, the behavioural environment to the subjective psychological environment in which decisions are made and then translated into overt action in the phenomenal environment (Cadwallader, 1992, discussing Kirk, 1963).
subjective assessments of place utility are at best partial predictors of actual migration ... Findings point to the need to give more weight to personal and structural constraints on migration which, in the decision-making process, may override place utility considerations in the determination of intentions and actual migration decisions. (Simmons, 1985-6:121)

This quote pinpoints one of the major disadvantages of this approach in terms of its application in migration studies: its lack of a macro-scale structural context to complement its micro-scale analysis. The behavioural approach in general has also been attacked for neglecting the societal constraints on individual human behaviour (Cadwallader, 1992). In terms of their ability to include gender, behavioural studies are able to highlight the important role of women in various economic sectors, while recognising that their geographical mobility and rates of participation are also shaped by cultural constraints and class differences (Chant and Radcliffe, 1992). In this sense they have a distinct advantage over the conventional neo-classical model. On the other hand, they are unable to generalise about features of male and female migration beyond the particular society or area under study and so do not provide a framework for comparative research (ibid.).

2.2.2 Structural approaches

The common feature of structural approaches is that they attribute observed patterns of migration not to individual motivations and decisions but to large-scale social and spatial structures (Cohen, 1987; Goss and Lindquist, 1995). One of the earliest structural approaches was the macro-theory derived from neo-classical economics, which attributed migration to geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labour. The resulting differential in wages causes workers from low-wage areas to move to high-wage areas (Massey et al., 1993). The transfer of labour leads, at equilibrium, to an international wage differential that reflects only the costs of migration (Friedmann, 1966, in Pessar, 1982a; Massey et al., 1993). The model may be applied to both internal and international migration, but it tends to be used in relation to existing migration flows, and does not explain why no similar movements arise from equally ‘poor’ or more impoverished nations, or why source areas of out-migration tend to be regionally concentrated within sending countries (Portes and Böröcz, 1989). It fails to account either for differences between countries of origin in the size and direction of migration flows, or for differences between individuals in their propensity to migrate (Portes, 1991).
More recent structural, or historical-structural, approaches explain migration in terms of macro-level structural determinants, and are rooted in the historical economic and political relationship between sending and receiving communities (Portes, 1991). Neo-Marxist dependency theory, dual labour market theory, and the world systems framework represent several closely related but distinct forms of this approach.

Dependency theorists argue that labour migration occurs because of the uneven spatial development resulting from colonial and neo-colonial relationships between developed capitalist economies and the underdeveloped peripheries (Goss and Lindquist, 1995). The transfer of labour is thus a mechanism of exploitation in the dependent relationship between the more developed core and the less developed periphery (Wiest, 1984).

Dual labour market theory argues that international migration stems from the intrinsic labour demands of modern industrial societies (Massey et al., 1993). Michael Piore (1979) has expounded this viewpoint in most detail, asserting that international migration is caused by a permanent demand for immigrant labour that is inherent to the economic structure of ‘developed’ nations. The basic thrust of his argument is that job characteristics other than income operate both to make ‘developed’ societies resistant to their elimination and to make native workers reluctant to accept them, hence creating a continuous supply of jobs for immigrants (Piore, 1979). A dual labour market is thus created, with immigrant workers concentrated in the secondary sector of low-paid, low-status work in labour-intensive occupations with few prospects of upward mobility and native workers drawn towards the primary sector exhibiting the opposite characteristics (Massey et al., 1993; Piore, 1979).

World systems theory posits international labour migration as an inevitable outgrowth of the development of the global capitalist economy. This development and expansion occurs as capital from the core penetrates the periphery, causing a fundamental transformation of the labour process in these latter areas. One of the outcomes of this transformation is the movement of labour from the periphery to the core (Portes and Walton, 1981). In other words, there is an intersection between the internationalisation of production and international labour migration (Sassen, 1988). Saskia Sassen reasons that significant levels and concentrations of direct foreign investment within the global economic system promote emigration from the areas receiving this investment through a combination of three
mechanisms. These are: firstly, the incorporation of new segments of the population into wage labour, with associated disruption of traditional work structures; secondly, the feminisation of the new industrial work-force; and thirdly, the consolidation of objective and ideological links with highly industrialised countries.

The main problem with approaches of this nature is a general failure to account for the migration of one individual rather than another. This stems directly from the preoccupation with purely structural determinants of migration. These structural factors undoubtedly constitute important stimulants to migration flows. The assumption however is that individual behaviour is a result of location (implicitly, class location) within the larger political and economic system, leaving no room for human variation (Wood, 1982).

This lack of differentiation between people as potential migrants extends to the gender-blind nature of most models of this kind. This criticism requires qualification, as efforts have been made within this context to consider female migration in relation to structural transformations of the world economy and its increasing globalisation (Bilac, 1995). Work has been done which theorises the labour migration of women with reference to the new international division of labour (e.g. Sassen, 1984). Confining analysis to the macro-scale ignores however the equally important social context of the micro-level. 'This approach tends to lose sight of the individual decision-making process, and ... it loses the heterogeneity of social structures which underlie the migration process' (Chell, 1995:15). Similarly, the emphasis on production means the relations of reproduction are marginalised (Chant and Radcliffe, 1992).

2.2.3 International migration systems

The possibility of using a systems approach to study migration was first put forward by Akin Mabogunje (1970) with reference to internal rural-urban migration. More recently, it has been adopted in connection with international migration (Kritz et al., 1992). The basis of the systems approach is the concept of a migration system constituted by a group of countries that exchange large numbers of migrants with each other (Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992). It is increasingly argued that the study of international migration must recognise the reality of a world characterised by increasing political, economic and social interdependence among nation states (Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992; Richmond, 1994).
Orthodox theoretical perspectives about the origins of migration flows have two common characteristics according to Alejandro Portes and József Böröcz (1989). The first is that they are based on an image of the world divided by national boundaries and of immigration as an event taking place between self-contained political entities. The second is that they tend to impute to sending countries attributes which are the obverse of those in the receiving society. They go on to argue that:

immigration, like other internationalised processes, does not so much take place between compartmentalised national units as within an overarching system, itself a product of historical development.
(Portes and Böröcz, 1989:626)

The aim of the systems approach is thus to link immigration with other international flows of capital, goods and technology, while also recognising the influence of political and cultural factors (Stalker, 1994). It claims to incorporate both macro- and micro-levels of influence, the former incorporating the concept of global interdependence, the latter including the networks, practices and beliefs of the migrants themselves (Castles and Miller, 1993). One of the key features of the migration systems paradigm is that it highlights the fact that migration is an intrinsically dynamic process by stressing the diverse linkages and feedback mechanisms between elements at all levels of the system. Migration is seen as a sequential process of decision, transition, and adaptation by the individual made within the context of general political-economic and specific social relationships at each stage (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987).

The all-encompassing nature of this model is very seductive. As component parts of the global system, both sending and receiving areas are awarded consideration, and the focus on two-way flows and feedback mechanisms ensures that return migration is incorporated theoretically. The dynamic nature of the migration process is also apparent. There are however several important draw-backs. Firstly, this approach reflects the integrated and complex nature of migration, but may do so at the expense of clarity (Stalker, 1994). Secondly, while the model is theoretically elegant, actual migration systems are difficult to identify in the absence of a comprehensive global data-set on population flows. Most proponents of systems theory adopt a regional approach, but intra-regional migration usually coexists with other flows which originate or end in countries outside the region (Zlotnik, 1992). Hence the accuracy of analysis which the model promises is lost due to the difficulty of its application.
Thirdly, the intersection between macro- and micro-structures is part of the model, but to date, the concentration on macro-level processes has tended to overshadow more human-level concerns, except where the major focus is on migration networks (discussed below) within migration systems. In general, a conceptual integration of individual and structural factors has not been achieved. Finally, and related to the previous point, systems theory runs the risk of being gender-blind. No doubt the feminisation of certain labour markets and hence the growing demand for female immigrant workers in some core nations can be satisfactorily theorised within this global model. But the same criticism made above of the structural approach applies equally here: namely that micro-level factors which influence the supply of this female labour, most importantly the gender division of labour and gendered power structures at a household level, are excluded. Thus, although the systems approach can provide us with a very useful broad-brush perspective on global patterns, trends and processes, I would argue that it is a complement to, rather than a substitute for, more detailed social studies at a household and community level. Connected to this notion of complementarity, it is also worth noting that migration systems theory has been described as ‘not a separate theory so much as a generalisation following from foregoing theories’ (Massey et al., 1993:454). In other words it is descriptive rather than predictive or truly theoretical and thus may be used in tandem with other explanatory frameworks, particularly those which profess to explain the root causes of migration.

2.2.4 Social networks of migration

The role of social networks in migration is an issue which has always received some attention in the literature (e.g. Hugo, 1981; Lomnitz, 1977; Mines, 1984; Smith, 1976). Current interest in these networks accompanies the development of a migration systems perspective (discussed above) and the growing awareness of the macro- and micro-determinants of migration. It is also related to the rise in family-based migration to major industrialised countries (Boyd, 1989). Migrant network theory attempts to explain the perpetuation of migration across time and space rather than its initiation. The conditions which contribute to this perpetuation may be very different from those which explain its initiation, hence this theory, like the systems approach, can be complementary to others which treat the root cause of migration (Massey et al., 1993). Networks link populations in sending and receiving societies in a dynamic manner, and provide a means for examining migration systems that moves beyond a focus on the motivations of individual
actors, yet remains close to the level of human actors coping with reality (Gurak and Caces, 1992). Although networks represent just one link in a systems framework, they have also received attention outside of this context as a means of focusing on migration, once initiated, as an inherently social, rather than economic, process (Massey et al., 1987; Portes, 1991). Hence they warrant some discussion in their own right.

A starting point for research on social networks is that structural factors provide the context within which migration decisions are made by individuals or groups. At the micro-level of analysis however, the decision to migrate is influenced by the existence of social networks, which connect people across space (Boyd, 1989). Once networks develop, they support and encourage additional migration. They thus explain the persistence of migration long after changes in the original structural conditions which induced migration (Massey et al., 1987). The strength of a social networks approach lies in its ability to incorporate multiple levels of analysis. Individual labour migration, remittances and network growth are seen as interacting to create feedback mechanisms which contribute to the eventual establishment of cumulative causation of migration, making additional movement progressively more likely over time (Massey, 1990). These mechanisms are reinforced and shaped by macro-level relationships within the larger political economy, and themselves produce structural changes that lead to further migration (Massey, 1988, 1990).

Jon Goss and Bruce Lindquist (1995) point to two problems with this approach. The first is that it contributes to an idealisation of community consistent with the dominant conception of rural societies in development literature. The second is that migrant networks are presumed to expand opportunities for migration throughout the community as they evolve, eventually providing near universal access to migration. Access to migration may not necessarily be equalised over time however since as networks expand they may actually become more selective and competitive. I would add a further major drawback: much of the research on networks is indifferent to gender. Some studies emphasise the experience of male migrants or all migrants undifferentiated by sex, while others focus on household decision-making strategies (Boyd, 1989). This is consistent with a general research orientation which assumes that women migrate only as part of family migrations (Morokvašić, 1983, 1984; Ranney and Kossoudji, 1984). As a result of this outlook, little systematic attention is paid to gender in the development and persistence
of networks across time and space. There is a general 'insensitivity to the ways in which the gender division of labour shapes the determinants and consequences of personal networks in migration' (Fawcett, 1989:661). Network models can be enriched by explicit analyses of women’s participation in networks (e.g. Lindstrom, 1991), but many of the fundamental social mechanisms which influence women’s role in migration networks are consolidated at the level of the household.

2.2.5 The structuration model

This model is drawn from contemporary sociological theory, and is based on the concept of structuration developed by Anthony Giddens to express the mutual dependency, rather than opposition, of social structure and human agency (Giddens, 1979, 1990). It takes account not only of the responses of individuals to structural constraints, but also opportunities (Gilbert and Kleinpenning, 1986). The development of this model, which is not yet complete, also owes much to the disciplines of history, anthropology and gender studies (Wright, 1995).

From this perspective:

the structural causes of labour market formation and uneven spatial distribution are combined with an awareness of the highly selective individual responses of Third World inhabitants who are often faced with a limited number of strategies to utilise for survival, one of which is migration.
(Chant and Radcliffe, 1992:19)

The structuration perspective has also been used as a way of reconceptualising migrant networks:

as migrant institutions that articulate, in a non-functionalist way, the individual migrant and the global economy, ‘stretching’ social relations across time and space to bring together the potential migrant and the overseas employer.
(Goss and Lindquist, 1995:335)

It has been noted however that early accounts of migration which aimed to combine agency and structure tended to perpetuate the neglect of gender that has characterised both macro- and micro-theories of migration. Such models recognised that not all migrants are equal in terms of their potential to influence social events, but they focused on class distinctions between migrants and racial distinctions between migrants and natives,
overlooking differences based on gender or explaining them through biological
determinism (Wright, 1995). In other words, while Giddens ‘denies that classes are always
the most basic categories in hierarchies of inequality’ and is aware of the need to look at
‘hierarchies of inequality of all kinds - for example, hierarchies based upon status, gender,
ethnicity’, most applications of his structuration theory in migration studies have not done
this (Cohen, 1989:230). Recently the gender division of labour has been questioned, and
analysis has begun to be developed at three (conceptually) distinct levels: the micro-level
of individual behaviour/agency; the macro-level of political economy; and the meso-level
of the household (Wright, 1995).

2.2.6 The household strategies approach

Feminist perspectives call for analyses which include conceptually a gender division of
labour as a key ingredient of theoretical paradigms (Boyd, 1989). As is apparent from the
critique of approaches to migration studies above, few have attempted to do this. Structual analyses largely fail to include the experience of the gendered individual,
conceptualising migrants as a homogenous group, as in ‘the migrant labour force’. Individualistic approaches tend to overlook the wider social (and gendered) structures
within which individuals are embedded. The critical need to link the macro- and micro­
levels in reaching a fuller understanding of how gender divisions affect social processes
has been noted in several disciplines.

Feminist researchers in sociology, for example, point to the need to ‘rejoin the macro­
social (and the study of social structure) with the micro-social (and the social­
psychological study of how individuals perceive their place within the social structure)’
(Daniels, 1982:347). The integrative approaches of migrant systems and migrant networks
seek to link macro- and micro-scales, working from the ‘top-down’ and the ‘bottom-up’
respectively, but as shown above, also have their shortcomings. The structuration model
applied to migration sounds promising, but has yet to fulfil its promise to include gender
in its analysis.

A ‘new economics of migration’, or household strategies approach, has recently emerged,
which also pitches itself some way between the individual and the structural. It has been
suggested that some elements of the household strategies model can be found in the
structuration model (Wright, 1995). The household strategies framework has also been used in more general contexts, which I will discuss in the following section; here, the emphasis is on its application in migration studies. The basis of this approach is that migration decisions are made not by isolated individual actors, but by larger social units, typically families or households, motivated not by income maximisation but by income diversification and risk minimisation (Lauby and Stark, 1988; Stark, 1984). From this viewpoint, the:

migration of individual members or the entire household unit represents a strategy at the household level to achieve a fit between resources such as land and capital, the consumption needs of its members and the alternatives for generating monetary and non-monetary income. (Boyd, 1989:645)

The link to the macro-level is made plain in the household strategies model proposed by Charles Wood, in which migration is described as 'an important aspect of the adaptive strategy that the household pursues in response to changing structural constraints' (Wood, 1981:340). At the same time, migration is determined by micro-level factors, such as the gender divisions of labour within the household which release some members while retaining others (Chant and Radcliffe, 1992).

The problem with this approach is that the household is assumed to allocate rationally capital and labour resources to provide for the productive and reproductive needs of its members - effectively substituting the rational, calculating individual of neo-classical economics with a rational, calculating household (Goss and Lindquist, 1995). Sylvia Chant and Sarah Radcliffe (1992) point to two further flaws of the household strategies approach. The first is that the theoretical basis of the model has been insufficiently substantiated through empirical work - though this surely provides a justification for further research in this area. The second is that the terminology is imprecisely defined and drawn from both feminist and Marxist works, which are often contradictory. This may present a larger problem, and is connected to a third, still more far-reaching problem which can be identified. This is that the actual concepts, and not just the language in which they are expressed, are misleading and misplaced. The concept of a unified household strategy in particular:

misrepresents intra-household behaviour, obscures intra-household stratification by gender and generation, and stifles the voices of the unempowered - usually females and the young. (Wolf, 1990:44)
A strategy implies a conscious, collaborative decision to benefit all those involved, when in fact ‘collective family strategies are not always in harmony with the strategies of individual members’ (Hareven, 1987:xvi).

Yet it does seem that the primary factors in the analysis of who migrates, whether or not anyone else moves, and who stays, can be identified as: the organisation of productive and reproductive labour at the domestic level; the divisions of power, decision-making and status within the household; and the pattern of gender segregation in labour markets of both sending and receiving areas. State policies, and cultural and social ideologies are further sources of influence (Chant, 1992b). The interaction of macro- and micro-levels is clearly apparent in this brief summary of the influential factors in migration. I argue that a household approach is a progressive framework with which to analyse these primary factors in the migration process at both the macro- and micro-levels. Not only that, but the empirical testing of the household approach in the evaluation of migration situations could lead to the development of a more general household framework for widespread application in feminist and gender studies. This thesis aims to contribute to this development, and a conceptual framework of the household to be tested in the analysis of migration from Mexico to the US is discussed in the final section of this chapter. In the following section I address some of the problematics of the theoretical construction of ‘the household’ and the ‘household strategy’.

2.3 The household and the concept of household strategies

To adopt a household approach clearly means arriving at some definition of what exactly is meant by the term ‘household’. In early anthropological studies ‘household’ was often seen as synonymous with ‘family’ (e.g. Malinowski, 1963). More contemporary literature has differentiated between the two, although confusion remains (Young, 1992). The most widely accepted distinction in anthropology contrasts kinship and spatial propinquity as the essential features defining membership in the family and household respectively (Yanagisako, 1979). In the discussion presented here I concentrate on formulations of the household, beginning with this notion of propinquity.
The idea of a household defined through co-residence is appealing in its simplicity, but in practice there may be difficulties in identifying the boundaries of households. Several writers question the existence of the household as a discrete unit, pointing to boundaries which may be highly permeable where the ‘unit’ is deeply embedded in wider social structures and networks (Guyer and Peters, 1987; Netting et al., 1984). The question arises, for instance, as to whether to define as a single household residences that share a common yard or plot, and whether to include servants, boarders and lodgers as members of the household (Yanagisako, 1979; Varley, 1994). In migration studies in particular, the questions of where to draw the boundaries of a household, and whether or not household membership may be preserved despite physical absence, are important ones (Netting et al., 1984; Wilk and Netting, 1984; Wood, 1981).

Furthermore, it has long been recognised that even where the term household is primarily defined through co-residence, more than this is usually implied when the term is used (Bender, 1967). For instance, the sharing of activities by members of a household is widely assumed. Hence, households conceptually become task-oriented residence units (Netting et al., 1984). Functional definitions of the household centre around ideas of shared productive and reproductive activities, particularly those which are ‘domestic’. These ideas are also ill-defined, but usually refer to activities related to food production and consumption or to sexual reproduction, child-care and socialisation (Fortes, 1958; Yanagisako, 1979). Thus if the notion of the household unit is also to encompass these functional aspects, a description of the household as people who are co-resident may be insufficient. Situations can be envisaged in which people are co-resident but do not share any of these activities. For example, in large cities, particularly in the ‘developed world’, it is common for non-related tenants to share rented accommodation but to lead separate lives in the same building, cooking, cleaning and shopping individually. Conversely, other people, perhaps linked by kinship or marriage bonds, may contribute to such activities but not live in the household in terms of its spatially defined area. Women with daughters or daughters-in-law who work outside the home may, for instance, assist in the child-care of their grand-children and even in housework, while living in a physically separate ‘household’.

In addition, and more importantly from a feminist viewpoint, the ‘domestic’ activities associated with the household are often equated with women’s work. Such tasks are
ascribed a naturalised status, and the 'domestic' domain is interpreted as somehow inherently 'female' (Harris, 1984). In other words, a particular problem of studies which use the household as a unit of analysis is that purportedly analytic categories are in fact heavily influenced by implicit ideological biases (Collier et al., 1982; Guyer and Peters, 1987). These biases are also often highly ethnocentric, presupposing a male household head and breadwinner in the (capitalist) public domain with a female housewife occupied with consumption, reproduction, and child-care (Oppong and Haavia-Manila, 1979). This picture is in any case inaccurate even for the context for which it was advanced; for example, women in industrial society have always worked for wages (Tilly and Scott, 1978).

In the end, there is not, nor can there be, one formal and universal definition of the household. Both the form and the functions which households take are inter-related and dependent on the cultural, social and historical context (Wilk and Netting, 1984). There are thus arguments for the abolition of the household as a unit of study (Ashworth, 1992). Prudence Woodford-Berger (1981, cited in Netting et al., 1984:xxv), for example, claims that the household should remain 'an unresolved, multi-dimensional concept'. Yet research demands an empirical unit of investigation, and while the vagueness of the household definition may be theoretically unsatisfying, it is also suggested that the household as an analytical concept is unlikely to disappear, because it is a central element in many social science methodologies (Netting et al., 1984; Varley, 1994).

The notion which arises is that of a pragmatically defined household, formulated with due regard both to the cultural and ideological context, and to the purpose of the particular research project. This widens the possibility of a multi-dimensional approach, since the household can be used in a range of different studies, shedding light on different aspects of household form, function and change in varied social and historical contexts. And since the definition of the household employed is contingent on the nature and perspective of the study undertaken, there is no danger of ultimately 'resolving' the concept of a household into a single universal construct. Instead of striving for universal definitions of the household, we should, in the post-modern style, embrace the differentiation and lack of consensus which the variety of concepts and definitions exhibit. Of course, this presents problems for comparative studies, but if we take the lack of 'a' household as a
given, we can concentrate on the more important and meaningful comparison of processes.

Accepting that the definition of the household may be guided by practical concerns does not mean that theoretical assumptions which accompany constructions of the household should go unquestioned. In the remainder of this section I present a critique of the conceptualisation of the household as an undifferentiated unit. Many conventional definitions of the household refer to a co-resident group of persons who share most aspects of consumption, drawing on and allocating a common pool of resources (including labour) to ensure their material reproduction (Schmink, 1984; Wallerstein and Smith, 1992; Young, 1992). Implicit in such definitions is the notion of pursuit of a common goal; this goal is presumed to be the maintenance and fulfilment of the welfare and the best interests of the household as a whole and of its individual members. In order to achieve this goal, ‘strategies’ are employed to make best use of the resources and opportunities available to household members. A distinction may be drawn between ‘survival strategies’ aimed at fulfilling basic needs and ‘mobility strategies’ striving for improvement, although this distinction may be blurred because the definition of basic needs will vary over time both within and between societies (Schmink, 1984).

The unitary household with its survival (or mobility) strategies is a concept which is perhaps most explicitly expressed in the framework of ‘new household economics’ developed by Gary Becker (1965) and subsequently adopted in a number of fields, including migration studies (Wood, 1981, 1982). In this model, households aim to minimise the costs of household production and maximise the utility of household consumption (Evans, 1991). The welfare of individual household members is integrated into a ‘unified family welfare function’ (Schultz, 1988). The household is ruled by a ‘benevolent dictator’ who sets goals in the interest of the household as a whole (Becker, 1965).

Such economic approaches to the household have several pitfalls, which are by now quite well-recognised in the literature. Firstly, focusing only on the economic aspects of households is misleading because the behaviour of household members is determined not just by economic but also by social factors (Bach and Schraml, 1982). On the other hand, inequalities within the household may be at least partially related to differentials in economic bargaining power, so that neo-classical economic theory cannot be excused from
not taking on board the implications of inequalities where these are measured in its own
terms (Folbre, 1988; Sen, 1983). Secondly, new household economic models assume a
degree of free choice and autonomy in household decision-making (Evans, 1991; Schmink,
1984), and the concept of strategies implies conscious, rational planning and behaviour
which may not exist (Wolf, 1990). If households have no explicit objectives however and
merely respond to one set of circumstances after another, then the concept of strategy
becomes synonymous with the household’s history and becomes redundant as a separate
analytical construct (Bach and Schraml, 1982). The main thrust of this second criticism
then, is that it does not give due consideration to structural factors which constrain and
condition household decisions.

Thirdly, the internal process of decision-making is relatively neglected in studies of
household strategies, even those outside the economic paradigm. Although empirically the
household is recognised as being composed of a number of different individuals of
different ages and sexes, economically and socially it is treated as though it were an
individual, a unitary social actor and 'a' decision-maker (Guyer and Peters, 1987; Young,
1992). The concept of household strategies implies a congruence of interests within the
household unit, as alluded to in the previous section, but in reality, while some agreement
on general goals (for instance, survival) is probable, conflict and tension between
household members can also be expected, especially between generations and between the
sexes (Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Jelin, 1991a; Schmink, 1984; Sen, 1983). Household
members may have different and even competing interests. Nor can it be assumed that
income and other resources are pooled efficiently or distributed equitably within the
household (Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Holcomb and Rothenberg, 1991; Townsend and
Momsen, 1987). It is the lack of exposure of intra-household differences and inequalities,
neglecting in particular the issue of gender, which stimulates feminist critiques of orthodox
concepts of the household and household strategies. These critiques pose a serious
challenge to conventional economic theories (Folbre, 1988), and also to traditional
anthropological notions of the universal and unified functionalist household.

Feminist scholars have argued against assumptions of family and household unity, and for
attention to multiple voices, gendered interests, and the unequal distribution of resources
(Hartmann, 1981; Jelin, 1991a; Thorne and Yalom, 1982; Young, 1992). Concern is thus
moving to intra-household relations between genders and generations (Benería and Roldan,
1987; Guyer and Peters, 1987), but it is also asserted that we still know relatively little about intra-household processes, conflicts and dynamics, especially within poor ‘developing world’ peasant and proletarian households (Wolf, 1990). In general, the lack of analysis of household relations reflects a romanticised view of automatic solidarity between members of poor households, and assumes cohesion and co-operation not conflict as the bases of intra-household relationships. It is assumed that the young and female obediently comply with household decisions or strategies (*ibid.*).

An alternative concept to the ideology of the monolithic household is the depiction of the household as an arena of conflict, a locus of internal struggle over production and redistribution (Hartmann, 1987). Income allocation within households, for instance, may be a major area of disagreement and inequality; alternatively, ‘co-operation’ may come about through simple lack of choice of one or more of the individual household members involved (Beneria and Roldan, 1987; Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Pahl, 1991). Most households however are characterised by neither complete co-operation nor total conflict of interests, but by ‘partial altruism ... [and] complicated reciprocity’ (Folbre, 1986:251). Amartya Sen has described household members as being in a state of ‘cooperative conflict’ and asserts that ‘social arrangements regarding who does what, who gets to consume what, and who takes what decisions can be seen as responses to this combined problem of cooperation and conflict’ (Sen, 1990:129).

Households thus often have a dual nature, with members having at the same time mutually advantageous shared goals, and individually differentiated personal goals (Jelin, 1991b). The contradiction encapsulated within the household is that it is a unit which in some respects has shared interests because the particular relations of household members to production and redistribution ensure mutual dependence (Hartmann, 1987), but in other ways the division of labour and distributive processes within the household create conditions for divergent interests among members (Jelin, 1991b).

With regard to household strategies, the important question which arises is: whose strategies are we actually observing? (Hareven, 1987). The new home economics model’s concept of the ‘benevolent dictator’ assumes an inherent altruism in decision-making, privileging the so-called altruist or household head with a sense of responsibility for family welfare that empirical research is not able to substantiate (Evans, 1991). Male bias also
intrudes in the presumption that the individual ‘altruist’ or decision-maker is a man (Wolf, 1990). This reflects the biased tendency of many social science models to assign a male household head wherever a man is present, regardless of the actual configurations of power, economic support, legal property or land rights (Harris, 1984; Townsend and Momsen, 1987; Youssef and Hetler, 1986).

Alternatively, the household is treated as though it had interests and a logic of its own (Folbre, 1986) and individual behaviour is interpreted as though motivated by collective household interests (Wolf, 1990). Yet collective family strategies are not always in harmony with the strategies of individual members, hence an examination of strategies requires an understanding of tensions and conflicts within the family, behind the front of uniform strategies which the family might be projecting to the outside world (Hareven, 1987). It is not the household itself which makes decisions, but certain people within it; thus household strategies embody relationships of power, domination and subordination (Wolf, 1990). A feminist point of departure from the idea of household strategies thus recognises that these so-called strategies are often shaped by contention, bargaining, negotiation and domination (Tilly and Scott, 1978).

The household therefore represents a social group in some senses, but at the same time it cannot be divorced from a consideration of the individuals of whom it is comprised. Similarly, the behaviour of individual members may in some ways benefit the household as a whole, but notions of ‘household strategies’ should not ignore the fact that while such ‘strategies’ may represent cooperation, they may also disguise a degree of conflict. Frictions between household members often occur along gender lines, but it is too simplistic to assume inevitable male domination of female interests. The balance of power may tilt to different sides in different areas of control and decision-making, and is of course also related to external ideologies and social structures of gender. Hence, as with ‘the household’, there can be no universal definition of a ‘household strategy’. Variation occurs at a number of levels: within any one household, depending on the particular issue and circumstances involved; between households in similar social and cultural contexts, depending on a variety of factors internal to the households concerned; and between

2 The term ‘family’ is used here because Hareven is talking from the perspective of a family historian. While the family and the household are often distinct units, as discussed earlier, the points made here apply equally well to most definitions of a ‘household’. 42
households in different socio-cultural settings, depending on the effects these settings have on intra-household relationships and processes.

There have been some moves towards formulating appropriate feminist household models, and unitary constructs of household behaviour are to some extent giving way to 'bargaining households' (Bruce and Dwyer, 1988). Amartya Sen's (1983) economic model of the household as a scene of 'co-operative conflict', referred to above, portrays the household as a differentiated unit. The essence of this model is the notion that there are many 'cooperative outcomes' - beneficial to all household members compared with non-cooperation - but different household members may have conflicting interests which mean they prefer different 'co-operative outcomes' (Sen, 1983, 1990). The choice between these different 'cooperative outcomes' is thus conceptualised as a bargaining process between parties whose bargaining power depends on their position as individuals within the larger economy.

The idea of gender inequality within the household is addressed by this model. Attention is also directed towards gender relations outside the household: for instance, the less power people have to order their lives satisfactorily outside the household, the more likely they are to remain within it (Wilson, 1991). By extension, those household members with less power outside the household are also more likely to accept a subordination of their interests within it. Yet despite consideration of the effects of dominant ideologies on intra-household situations, economic factors are privileged to the detriment of other concerns. Nonetheless, the rationale behind the model is progressive in incorporating notions of both co-operation and conflict, and sets a useful precedent for the development of household models sensitive to internal differentiation. In the following section I expand this idea of a model which incorporates both collectivity and individuality.

2.4 The gendered household approach as a conceptual framework in migration studies

One of the criticisms of conventional theories of migration discussed above is that they concentrate on either the macro-level of analysis or the micro-level. A major advantage of household approaches, both in migration studies and in other fields, is that they are able
to direct attention towards both levels, *ie.* inside and outside the household unit itself. Yet in migration studies thus far, the notion of ‘the household’ associated with the household strategies has not managed to overcome the conceptual problems discussed in the previous section. In other fields, such as economics, discussed above, and in development studies, household approaches have begun to move beyond conceptions of the unified household, developing frameworks which acknowledge the differentiation that exists within the household unit.

The emerging approach, forged out of the critiques, is to recognise that the ‘household’ is of variable structure; is both the outcome and the channel of broader social processes; and is the site of separable, often competing rights, interests and responsibilities. (Guyer and Peters, 1987:210-211)

I argue here that such an approach is also appropriate for the study of migration as a gendered process. To distinguish this approach from previous notions of ‘new household economics’ and ‘household strategies’, I use the term *gendered household approach* here. This is intended to emphasise that while the household is used as the unit of analysis, the focus of this analysis, both inside and outside the household, is gender. The adoption of the gendered household approach in this thesis is a reflection of particular research interests, namely the interaction of gender with the migration process, rather than a belief that it is the only appropriate approach to the study of migration. In fact one of the advantages of the household approach is that it can be viewed as complementary to theories developed from the perspective of other concerns. For instance, the structuration models of migration which are currently being developed and which aim to analyse micro-, meso- and macro-levels, could benefit from the insights of the gendered household approach. I assert however that where the concern is explicitly to incorporate gender as an explanatory variable, the gendered household approach has several distinctive benefits relative to alternative frameworks. The deficits of these frameworks became clear in the review presented in the first section of this chapter.

The gendered household approach does not account for the root causes of migration as an aggregate phenomenon. It can however help to explain why and how the gendered individuals who make up the migration flow are assimilated into this stream, and the effect their migration has on them and on the other members of their households. This explanation includes an analysis of individual motivations and of household decision-making processes. At the same time, the gendered household approach can take account
of the large-scale structural factors, such as wage-differentials and labour markets, which may be said to be the underlying causes of the migration flow as a whole. The gendered effects of these structural variables on individual migrants and non-migrants can be interpreted within a household framework which considers both intra-household differences and inequalities in labour markets and society in general. In other words, the household provides the link between micro- and macro-levels of analysis which is missing from other conceptualisations of migration. It is thus able to provide a more complete picture of the migration process as it affects individual people, embedded in the relationships of reciprocity, conflict, hierarchy and co-operation which make up the social structures of the household unit.

Proponents of the household approach, in migration and in other areas, argue that it represents a locus of decision-making, and the point of convergence and mediation between the larger socio-economic system and individuals (Pessar, 1982a; Schmink, 1984; Stichter, 1990; Tilly and Scott, 1978). The household is an appropriate unit of analysis methodologically as well as conceptually, since it is also a meaningful and identifiable unit from the point of view of its component members (Chant, 1991). An orientation towards household-level studies re-introduces the micro-social level of analysis and re-directs attention towards everyday life (Jelin, 1991b). At the same time, everyday life as experienced at the household level can be linked to macro-level dynamics of economy, society and politics.

The very fact that the household is a site of conflicting as well as congruent interests provides a justification for its adoption as a framework for feminist analysis. This is because the conflict and co-operation within the household is often derived from the differentiation which exists between household members in terms of gender and generation. Critics of the household claim that it ignores differentiation, but feminist analysis does not mean that we should reject the household as lacking any analytic validity (Harris, 1984; Varley, 1994). Instead, the gendered household approach can use such differentiation and its implications as the basic starting point of its analysis.

The greatest potential of the gendered household approach thus lies in its ability to combine the macro-level with the micro-level. On the one hand, through focusing on the interaction of the household, in terms of the behaviour of its constituent members, with
labour markets and national immigration policy, societal features and changes can be evaluated. Such large-scale factors are not then seen as having a given effect on the migration process, but as forces which affect different people in a variety of ways, according to a number of characteristics, such as gender and age, which can be analysed at the household level. On the other hand, the focus can be turned to the individual process of migrant decision-making. People as decision-makers are located in the household context of organising structures and lines of authority, and the gendered household approach can bring this to bear in the consideration of individual motivations, which may be both personal and collective. Rather than simply being a convenient unit of study, the household in this approach engenders a particular framework and conceptual approach - that of analysis of the gendered interaction of household members with each other and with external variables in relation to a specific social process, in this case migration.

In terms of analysing migration as a gendered process then, the gendered household approach has three important implications. Firstly, large-scale factors which affect the propensity of women and men to migrate can be appraised. Such factors include the structure and specific demands of the labour market in places of origin and destination, and the prevailing gender norms and perceptions of appropriate roles for men and women in both locations. Secondly, intra-household features such as the nature of decision-making and inter-personal relations between household members as influenced by gender and by generation form an inherent component of the analysis of the migration decision. Migrants are thus conceptualised as individual social actors grounded in the real context of the household rather than as an asocial and undifferentiated economic group. Thirdly, the conceptual combination of micro- and macro-levels of analysis in the household allows a more detailed analysis of their interaction and inter-dependence than is normally possible in frameworks that focus only on one level of analysis.

As a result of its ability to incorporate multiple levels of analysis, the gendered household approach can be a constructive framework to use in the exploration of many gendered social processes, and can also act as a means of drawing them together. In migration studies specifically, the household reflects the context of decision-making, although as I have already stressed in the second section of this chapter, the adoption of the household as a unit does not mean that the activities of individual members have to be classified in
terms of 'household strategies'. The household is also an appropriate unit through which to explore the impacts of migration, both in terms of receiving remittances, which are then distributed according to household mechanisms of allocation, and in affording opportunities for change in the intra-household division of labour and authority.

A focus on the household in migrant source regions allows for the location of return migrants and the investigation of the phenomenon of return migration. The gendered household approach can similarly be employed in receiving areas to look at the varied impacts of whole-household migration on different household members, or to look at the incorporation of individual migrants into existing households at the destination. The latter demonstrates how the gendered household approach can be used in the study of migrant networks. Household approaches have been used to study migration in a variety of contexts, and have produced some revealing insights into the role of gender in migration (e.g. Chant, 1992a; Georges, 1990; Pessar, 1982b; Trager, 1984). As yet the household approach has not however been fully defined nor accepted as a conceptual framework for the study of migration as a gendered process. In the elaboration and empirical testing of the gendered household approach, this thesis aims to make a modest contribution to this project.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed several theoretical approaches to migration, and have reached the conclusion that most conventional frameworks are ill-equipped fully to incorporate gender. Structural analyses preclude any real analysis of the individual at all, let alone an individual with a specific gender, age, class and 'race'. Micro-scale approaches either rest on unrealistic conceptions of rational economic individuals, or where they are more sensitive to people, generally ignore their location within a wider socio-economic context. More recent developments in migration theory aim to synthesise the two levels of analysis. Household approaches represent one type of these recent alternatives, and a version of these, termed here the gendered household approach, is the conceptual framework adopted in this thesis.
It is important to note that being an ‘alternative’ does not necessarily exclude other theories of migration from having any analytic validity or use. The gendered household approach does not, for instance, explain the origins of aggregate migration flows, and hence may draw on migration systems theories for a large-scale context. What the gendered household approach does do, that the other approaches do not, is attempt to explain how constructions of gender influence both the composition of the migration flow and the impacts of migration on both migrants and non-migrants in a household context. Yet the potential of the household framework for the analysis of gender and its possible complementarity to larger-scale theories does not justify the lack of consideration of gender by these theories.

Household approaches have been seen to have their own problems. In particular, the notion of household strategies is open to criticisms from feminist discourses, focusing on its lack of differentiation between individuals in the household unit, or on the frequent assumption of a male household head. This critique is also aimed at the household as an analytic concept more generally. Discussion of this issue however revealed that the household does not have to be interpreted conventionally as a unified social group; it can be deconstructed to reveal individuals and their interactions with one another within the household, mediated by the axes of gender and generation. Differentiation between household members in the gendered household approach discussed in this chapter is used as the basis for analysis, not as a reason for its abandonment; both individuality and collectivity are relevant, and both are incorporated into this model.

Nor does the lack of a universal definition of the household invalidate the gendered household approach. An important conclusion to draw from this chapter is that the question ‘what is a household?’ should be interpreted with reference to the specific socio-cultural setting involved, and with reference to the nature and objectives of the research project. Of course, the definitions adopted should take account of internal differentiation and structures of authority within the household.

A final conclusion to be drawn from this discussion of the gendered household approach is that it has the potential to provide a gendered perspective in many areas of investigation across a range of disciplines. As a result of this widespread applicability, every opportunity should be taken empirically to test and to develop further the household model.
Because of its ability both to incorporate gender in the analysis of the migration process and to relate to the analysis of social processes other than migration, I have adopted the gendered household approach as a theoretical framework in this thesis. In the following chapter I describe how this framework was translated into a methodological strategy in the field. Many of the concerns I have raised here in a theoretical context are also of practical importance, and will receive further discussion where appropriate.
Chapter Three: The gendered household approach in the field

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss how the gendered household approach as presented in the previous chapter was operationalised in the field. While epistemology, methodology and method are separate issues, they are intertwined (Harding, 1987). Hence in this chapter I draw on all three to show how particular theoretical and ideological stances (epistemology) determined the research strategy (methodology) and techniques (method) adopted in the field. This concern to connect theory with practice explains the somewhat discursive nature of this chapter. It is not a straightforward account of the techniques used during the fieldwork period, but an attempt to explain how I made specific practical decisions with reference to some of the important concerns of the thesis as a whole.

The fieldwork had three major objectives. The first aim was to gain an impression of the incidence of migration to the US from a sample of households in working-class neighbourhoods of Guadalajara. The second goal was to construct a basic descriptive profile of both migrant and non-migrant households in this sample, and of the migrants themselves in terms of such variables as gender, age, position in the respondent household, and activities in the US. The third objective was to explore what migration meant to the migrants themselves and to those people left behind in the household, focusing particularly on how gender conditioned the participation and the experiences of individuals in the migration process. Through these three objectives, the overall aim of the fieldwork was to test empirically the gendered household approach in the analysis of migration.

I detail in the first section of this chapter how I arrived at the major definitions employed in the research project, linking back to the issues debated in the previous chapter. In the second section, I approach the concept of a methodology of multiple strategies. The feminist critique of many methodologies as inherently masculine reflections of male-oriented epistemologies is discussed, and the multiple strategies framework is proposed as an appropriate way of overcoming some of these problems. The third section is what may be seen as the ‘traditional’ methodology component of the thesis. In it I show how the concerns voiced in earlier sections of this chapter were translated into a research strategy, and detail what took place in the field. In the final section I consider my role as
researcher in the fieldwork context, and discuss how I feel my presence and my particular (perceived) persona affected the outcome of the research. I draw in this section on feminist work calling for an acknowledgement that the researcher becomes a part of the phenomenon which s/he studies.

3.2 Definitions

3.2.1 The household

In the gendered household approach the ‘household’ is the unit of analysis, and hence the first important definition to be made is that of ‘the household’ itself. As has been discussed in Chapter Three, the ‘household’ is conceptually very difficult to define. One of my conclusions in the previous chapter was that the ‘household’ should be defined with reference to the specific context and aim of the research project. Another was that the conventional idea of the household as a group of related individuals who pool resources for the benefit of the group and who are headed by a male breadwinner who acts as arbiter and decision-maker should be avoided (Young, 1992).

In the field, I took the household to include all the people who lived in the house, as part of the household, plus migrant household heads who were absent at the time of the survey, with qualifications as discussed below. Although ‘as part of the household’ may initially appear tautological, it was often a very important distinction to be made in the decision of who to include as household members. ‘As part of the household’ here means, at the most simplistic, and perhaps the most meaningful level, eating with the other household members, or having the right to do so (Brydon and Chant, 1989; Gilbert and Varley, 1991; Selby et al., 1990). Eating from a common pot is a socially recognised and meaningful household practice in Mexico, even though only certain (female) members prepare food (Varley, 1993). Being part of the household also generally means contributing to the common household budget or gasto if working. This is not always the case however, hence contribution to a common budget may be less accurate as a guiding principle to household membership in this context than possession of ‘eating rights’. Moreover, insisting that household members altruistically contribute resources for the benefit of the household as a whole fails to break away from the collective household construction criticised above.
An example of where this definition of ‘eating rights’ is useful is where married children of household heads live in the house of or on the same plot of land as their parents, with their own spouse and children. Sometimes they remain as part of the household, but at others form a separate household, cooking for themselves and maintaining a separate budget (Varley, 1993). If asked who lives in the household, respondents may list everyone who lives on the same plot - including married children who sometimes live in partially separate annexes or extensions to the main house (Varley, 1994). When questioned further about the usual customs of cooking and eating however, respondents are usually very clear about household differentiation.

3.2.2 The household head issue

The (re)definition of a household as a unit which does not assume collectivity, male headship or rigidly defined and prescribed gender roles is linked to the debate over household headship. To a large extent, this debate has been conflated with that over woman-headed households. Three means of establishing headship have generally been recognised:

[firstly] definitions which take as the head the one who reports himself (sic) as such or is so reported by another member of the household or family; secondly there are those which define the head as a person who controls the maintenance of the household - that is, exercises the authority to run the household; and thirdly, those which define the head as the ‘main supporter’ (chief earner) of the household.


A common argument is that censuses use biased and inconsistent definitions of the head of household, and also defer to cultural preferences for designating males as heads, regardless of their actual roles. This means that women who are heads of household, in terms of decision-making and provision of economic support, are often not reported as such (Youssef and Hetler, 1986). On the other hand, the implications of the possible exaggeration of woman-headed households have also recently come into question (Varley, 1996).

A fourth means of assigning headship may thus be added to the three identified above. This is ownership or possession of tenancy rights of the building in which the household is housed. In the US Census, for instance, the person or one of the persons in whose
name the house is owned or rented is designated as 'the householder'. This does not of course solve the problem of deciding which person should be classified as 'the householder' where the house is owned or rented under the names of more than one person. Ann Varley (1994) has argued, with reference to housing studies, that the householder(s) should be identified as the person or couple who acquired or rented a house/plot. In many cases, this means that there will be both a male and a female householder.

With reference to the methodology of my research project, the issue of headship is important because, as stated above, migrant household heads are awarded special consideration in analysis - this point will be elaborated below. The cultural preference for male heads referred to above is particularly telling. Why has the cultural elevation of men been transferred into academic categories which reinforce their dominance and increase their visibility? Why are men - or indeed, women - designated as 'heads' if they have a partner? Why are they not classified as joint heads? There is an economic argument for this common practice. Some women undeniably are the sole or primary economic supporters of their households. Where both a woman and a man who have paid employment are present in the same household however, it is likely that he will earn more. This assertion is based on the global patterns of male-female wage differentials (Stichter, 1990). But it should also be remembered that even in a situation in which there is a sole male bread-winner, it is often the work which his partner performs in the household that frees him to work for wages (Barrett, 1980; Hartmann, 1987). Moreover, contributions to household welfare are not just economic - women have a large input through their work inside the household (Birdsall and McGreevey, 1986). Hence, allocating headship on the basis of economic contribution falls into the trap of over-valuing waged work relative to unpaid work done in the household.

1 The male bias inherent in many parts of the academy, which has been discussed by several feminist academics (e.g. Graham, 1983; McDowell, 1990, 1992; Rose, 1993; Stacey, 1983) is clearly influential, and is also applicable to the census designers and processors who provide us with much of our knowledge of national and international household data.

2 Earning more does not necessarily mean contributing more. In fact there is widespread evidence to suggest that women devote a higher proportion of their income to household or collective expenditure than do men (e.g. Bruce and Dwyer, 1988). This lends further weight to the contention that women have equal right to be regarded as joint heads of household even if their actual economic income is less than that of men.
Similarly, cultural practices in many areas lead to men having ultimate power in the household, or the ideologically sanctioned right to this power, so that men may claim household headship or be identified as heads by other household members even if in practice they do not control the household. Hence, in terms of the first and second definitions above, it could be argued that men rather than women are household heads. Yet deconstructing the household to reveal internal differences in power can demonstrate that men and women have authority in different areas. In the study areas in Guadalajara, for example, many women said that their husbands made all the decisions, but then often qualified this by adding that while men were responsible for occasional, major decisions, they themselves were in fact in charge of daily decisions such as those involved in household budgeting. Judith Bruce and Daisy Dwyer (1988) also argue that many women are responsible for the daily financial management of their households, and that they are the primary guardians of both the physical and social status of their children. In such a situation, why is it judged that making one-off decisions on an irregular basis gives a man more right to headship than a woman who manages household activities and makes multiple smaller-scale decisions critical to the welfare of household members every day?

Arguing from a feminist perspective, where the core member of the household, defined according to any of the means identified above, has a partner, then both should be accorded joint headship status. This classification disregards any difference between the partners in the activities they perform or the renumeration, recognition and status they receive for them. Clearly this reflects a political position rather than the reality of many situations. Earning or controlling the most money, for instance, often is translated into decision-making power within the household, leading to women’s partial or total dependence on men’s income (Benería and Roldan, 1987; Sen, 1983; Pahl, 1991; Wilson, 1991). This could then be interpreted as male household headship. Nonetheless, apart from the ideological ‘right’ of a woman to be regarded as a joint head of household, conceptualising both a man and a woman as heads of household also serves to direct attention towards women, where in the categorisation of the same household as ‘male-headed’, they may be ignored. In this conceptualisation, male- or female-headed households exist only where the core member of the household has no normally resident partner.
I have discussed this theoretical issue at some length because it leads on to the practical problem of identifying the person or persons at the core of the household. For this project, house or land ownership, or possession of legal rights or tenancy was used as synonymous with headship. In the case of house loans, the core of the household was taken to be the person or people to whom the loan was made. This approach has been expounded in connection with housing issues in Mexico by Ann Varley, as mentioned above (see also Gilbert and Varley, 1991; Varley, 1996) and also proved to be a convenient way of ascertaining headship in my study of migration.

Couple-headed households were in fact found to be the most common form of headship in the sample when headship was defined in this way. Given that the most frequent household structure in the sample was the nuclear formation of parents and children, this focus on joint headship has led to a re-conceptualisation of what in orthodox terms would mostly be seen as male-headed households. Defining such households as couple-headed means that the woman in this structure is seen as a joint head rather than as a dependent wife and mother. Making women visible as individuals rather than anonymous dependants is ideologically important, and if adopted more widely, such a practice could also produce positive effects for women in policy formulations in several contexts.

3.2.3 The migrant household

A further debate in the definition of the household is how to delineate its boundaries and cope analytically with absent members (Bloch, 1973; Netting et al., 1984; Vinovskis, 1977). In a study of migration, this is clearly an issue of great practical relevance in the field, and a source of further definitional complication. The decision on whether or not to classify an absent migrant as a household member is one which has far-reaching ramifications, and therefore one which is worthy of some consideration here.

The categorisation of a migrant can affect household classification and household headship status and can therefore be critical at the analytical stage. I decided to include absent household heads, defined as described above, who were expected to return to the household, as full household members. This decision was taken on the basis that they were householders, either legally, through possession of the land title or tenancy agreement, or conceptually, with reference to the definition of headship adopted in this
project (see above), and because they were regarded as household members by the respondents themselves. Migrant household heads then, were included in the household classification and headship status, that is, given 'full membership status' of the household, despite their absence. Other absent household members were regarded as household members in the sense that their migration was noted as an absence from the household, but their membership was not taken into account in the categorisation of the household. In other words, they were awarded 'previous membership status', members at the time of migration, but in absence, ex-members.

This differential treatment of migrants is clearly not ideal, especially as it implicitly places more importance on household heads than on other household members. In order to do research, however, some pragmatic decisions inevitably have to be taken, balancing the theoretical ideals against the practical possibilities. In this case, I concluded that expectations of the household head's return were more definite than for other household members, such as adult children. This seemed to be because the latter were generally expected to leave the household at some stage, and where adult children became migrants to the US this was often seen as an extension of their departure from the parental home. Conversely, the departure of household heads on a permanent basis was not generally anticipated.

The 'full membership status' of household heads was thus predicated largely on this expectation of return. In summary, absent migrants were only taken into account in the classification of the household if they were household heads at the time of migration, and if they were expected to return, as household heads, to the same household. The conceptual consistency in this hierarchy of 'full membership status' and 'previous membership status' lies in the core role given to household heads, both female and male. In the same way that their status as householders accords them household headship, their status as household heads confers the right to be considered as core members in the household classification, even if they were not physically present at the time of the survey.

Defining a 'migrant household' also requires some definition of migration. This is the subject of some debate (for example, see Chapman and Prothero, 1983; Gould and Findlay, 1994; Skeldon, 1990). For the purposes of this study, a migrant household was defined
as one from which at least one member had left to live in the US\(^3\) for a period of at least six months. This member may or may not have returned at the time of the survey, but return migrants had to have spent at least six consecutive months in the US, and those still in the US at the time of the survey also had to have been in the US for a minimum of six months before the respondent household could be classified as a ‘migrant’ one. According to UN guidelines, a migrant is someone who changes residence for a period of a year or more. A period of six months rather than a year was chosen here because of the traditionally high degree of short-term circularity and seasonality in migration from rural areas of Mexico to the US (Cornelius et al., 1982; Lowell, 1992; Massey et al., 1987; Wiest, 1984). Hence, opting for a minimum migration duration of one year would obscure similar migration patterns if they existed in the urban context of the fieldwork project.

### 3.3 Multiple methods and feminist concerns

Methodological questions have formed an ongoing debate in anthropology and the social sciences. Proponents of quantitative methods (e.g. survey research and statistical analysis) used to generate so-called ‘hard’ data, and those of qualitative techniques (such as semi- and un-structured interviewing and the classic anthropological participant observation) producing ‘soft’ data have long been in opposition across a strict dialectical divide (Mitchell, 1983; Sieber, 1973). There has been an ‘ever-present desire to maintain a distinction between hard science and soft scholarship’ (Carey, 1989:99). There is however no real need to accept such a polarisation; as far back as the 1960s Morris Zelditch noted that ‘a field study is not a single method gathering a single kind of information’ (Zelditch, 1962:567). He went on to assess the value of a variety of techniques to collect different types of data, concluding that there may be a ‘prototype’ method for each data type.

Yet the inference which Zelditch makes is that *either* one technique *or* another is used, depending on the kind of data required (Sieber, 1973). Taking the idea of a complementarity of methods further leads to the notion of using multiple research methods (Burgess, 1984; Sieber, 1973; Whatmore, 1991). The assumption is that an integration of

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3 The intention of this definition was not to deny the importance of *internal* migration, or of possible international migration to other countries, but to focus explicitly on the subject of the research project: international migration from Mexico to the US.
multiple research methods in a single research strategy can enhance the value of each method and therefore improve the overall level of understanding. According to Robert Burgess:

multiple strategies of field research help to overcome the problems that stem from studies relying on a single theory, single method, single set of data and single investigator.

(Burgess, 1984:144)

With the recognition that the social world is multi-layered, and that representations of it are interpretations structured by language, gender, class, 'race' and ethnicity, comes the notion that:

no single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience. As a consequence ... qualitative (my emphasis) researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretative methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience that have been studied.

(Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b:12)

While conveying the essence of strategies of multiple methods, I would argue that by confining the idea of multiple methods to qualitative research, the work cited above runs the danger of reinforcing the unproductive division between quantitative and qualitative methodologies mentioned earlier. This danger is enhanced by the ongoing development and critique of qualitative research which is currently taking place (see for example Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a), which through its exclusive focus on such methods seems to imply that quantitative research no longer occurs. The exclusion of quantitative methods also reveals a contradiction in a qualitative style of research which is described as 'privileging no method over any other' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b:3). I am not advocating a return to positivist methodologies which claim objectivity and neutrality and in general I am in agreement with the argument that qualitative methods provide richer data on social processes. I would suggest however that it may be unwise to overlook completely the contributions which quantitative methods can make, especially in describing social phenomena.

Some researchers have called attention to the potential advantages which lie in the combination of so-called quantitative and qualitative methods. A research strategy employing both approaches can not only cross-check and 'fill out' results obtained from the different methods (Chambers, 1980), but also extend the possible levels of analysis to include both extensive/descriptive and intensive/explanatory (Whatmore, 1991). A
methodology of multiple strategies can thus combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches, ‘acknowledging the relative merits of different research strategies and using them to complementary advantage’ (Massey, 1987b:1515-1516). Using a multiple strategies approach to methodology may entail not only the adoption of a variety of research techniques, but also the application of one or more methods to different individuals in a single unit of observation, such as the household. This use of multiple methods, or ‘triangulation’, as it is sometimes known, ‘reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b:2). The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study can be understood then as a strategy which adds rigour, breadth and depth to an investigation (Flick, 1992).

The division between quantitative and qualitative methodologies has also frequently taken on an unfortunate parallel to the male-female polarity. Quantitative research techniques have often been seen to represent a ‘male style of knowing’ (Reinharz, 1979:7), adopting an active but impersonal stance compatible with the masculine ethos of the public domain in which it is typically employed (Graham, 1983). In contrast, qualitative research is portrayed as reflecting a ‘female style of knowing’, using a more personal approach to elicit ‘soft’ data about the private world through categories unlikely to lend themselves to quantification and statistical analysis (Graham, 1983; Reinharz, 1979). The logical implication is that qualitative and quantitative methods are best suited to the study of (and by) women and men respectively (Graham, 1983). This opposition can be seen to have two disadvantages. The first is that it reinforces the ideological divide between men as actors in the public sphere and women as caretakers of the private world, thereby maintaining feminine and masculine stereotypes. Secondly, it encourages an analytic separation of women’s and men’s issues and research, with the risk of creating what has been described as a ‘methodological ghetto for women’ (Graham, 1983:136).

Feminist researchers are among those who have criticised traditional quantitative research instruments such as the social survey and who have championed qualitative research methods (e.g. Harding, 1987; Morgan, 1981; Oakley, 1981; Roberts, 1981). Qualitative feminist research is not homogenous, but highly differentiated and complex. Virginia Olesen (1994) identifies three different, although in some senses overlapping, models of feminist research as feminist standpoint research, feminist empiricism and postmodernism,
the latter including feminist cultural studies. She goes on to suggest that it is unlikely, given this range of feminisms, that any orthodoxy, either traditional or postmodern, will prevail, but that the complexities of women’s lives are such that multiple approaches are required.

While there is not ‘a’ feminist perspective on an appropriate methodology, there are certain common strands of thought. Sandra Harding (1987) identifies three characteristics as: firstly, the generation of research problems from the perspective of women’s experience; secondly, the designing of research for women; and finally, the location of the researcher in the same plane as the subject, not as an invisible anonymity but as a real and present individual. These characteristics derive largely from feminist standpoint research and feminist empiricism (Olesen, 1994). Linda McDowell (1992) discusses further the issue of the positionality of the researcher, and suggests that there is a broad coincidence in feminist discourse on the importance of collaborative methods in attempting to break down the inherent power relations between researcher and informant. Others have also argued for greater interactivity between researcher and researched, and the development of a less exploitative and more egalitarian relationship in research situations (Oakley, 1981).

Several problematic issues have emerged for feminist (and non-feminist) qualitative researchers.

These issues derive from criticisms of empirical qualitative work, such as bias, questions about adequacy or credibility, relationships with persons in the research, and ethical implications. Others emerge from the impact of postcolonial deconstructive thought and postmodernism, such as whose voices are heard and how, and whether text should be created, and by whom.

(Olesen, 1994:165)

A further challenge for feminist qualitative research is to overcome the potential marginalisation of work done by women and with women as its subject. There is of course no reason why men should not also participate in qualitative research, and in fact there is a growing movement towards intensive qualitative methods in general. The results of such studies are not however always easily accepted, either by academics or by policymakers. It has been argued that qualitative research represents ‘a commitment to some version of a naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter, and an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of positivism’, and that ‘the academic and disciplinary
resistances to qualitative research illustrate the politics embedded in this field of discourse’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b:4). The risks of being marginalised or ignored are increased when innovative research methods are combined with a feminist perspective.

Drawing on the issues discussed here, the research strategy that I adopted in this thesis was one of multiple methods combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In the following section I describe how such an approach was operationalised in the field.

3.4 The research methodology

3.4.1 Research strategy design

The research strategy consisted of two complementary levels: extensive-quantitative and intensive-qualitative. These in turn corresponded to a household survey of randomly selected households, and semi-structured interviews with non-randomly selected individuals. Both methods were applied in three working class areas, or colonias populares, of Guadalajara, which were chosen to reflect a range of tenancy arrangements and settlement ages. The survey was designed with the intention of obtaining descriptive information about the households and individuals in the study communities, and about the extent and patterns of migration from these areas to the US. The interviews were intended to provide more subjective data about people’s perceptions, opinions and experiences of migration. In this way I addressed the three fieldwork objectives described at the beginning of this chapter.

The strategy I adopted is consonant with the methodology of multiple strategies: the utility of each technique was enhanced by the use of the other. Although the two methods were used to collect two different types of data, the data were inter-related and complementary. The household survey allowed for some statistical description of the migration process, and provided a context for the qualitative work. The latter gave a deeper understanding of what some of the features described at the quantitative level meant to the people involved. Importantly, this strategy also reflected the epistemological issues which I have discussed both in this chapter and the preceding one. There are two important points to note in this context.
Firstly, the unit of analysis and data collection for the survey was the household, corresponding to the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter Two. At the same time, the research methodology allowed for the possibility of multiple respondents within a single household - giving voice to individual members of the household corresponds to the concept of deconstructing the household. Although in practice one person was generally primarily responsible for answering the questionnaire which comprised the household survey (see Appendix One), in some instances the core couple answered together, and there were many examples of several other members also contributing information. This often led to disagreement and subsequent verification or alteration of facts. Such situations of dispute over ‘objective facts’ confirmed the notion that while the survey was designed as a ‘fact-finding’ instrument, it could not be expected to be entirely accurate, through no deliberate attempt of the respondents to mislead. This corresponds to the charge of misplaced accuracy and objectivity which is often levelled at the practices of quantitative research by proponents of qualitative methods. In addition, since most of the interviewees were first contacted through the survey, repeat visits to conduct the interview sometimes led to meeting household members not present on the first visit, and the gathering of additional opinions from them. In all, this meant that one, pre-specified person was not taken to speak for ‘the household’ as a unit.

Secondly, the interviews were of a semi-structured format, consisting only of a list of pre-prepared topics relevant to the respondent’s position as migrant, non-migrant, relative of a migrant, and so on (see Appendix Two). In practice, the subjects covered during the interviews were wide-ranging, and the flexible format allowed both myself and the interviewee to redirect the interview when we wished. This approach meant the respondent had greater freedom of expression and control over both the content and style of the encounter. My aim was to move away from the formal interview with its contingent power relations of domination and subordination (Oakley, 1981).

3.4.2 Selection of study sites

I selected three communities in Guadalajara for the research project. All were working class neighbourhoods, or colonias populares. This was a deliberate choice, since although the increasing participation of the Mexican middle-class professionals in migration to the
US has been commented upon (González de la Rocha, 1993), and there is undoubtedly a highly-skilled component to the migration flow, the majority of Mexican migrants to the US, like the majority of Mexicans in general, are working class. The three study sites will be known here as Villa del Sur, Colonia Tlaloc and San Pedro, although it should be noted that these are not the real names of the areas. (The location of these sites in the city of Guadalajara can be seen on Map 4.2). The rationale for the selection was to include areas with varying characteristics in order to incorporate a range of people with potentially different engagements with the migration process.

Villa del Sur was chosen as a relatively young owner-occupied settlement in the expectation that it might include newly established couples or young families with recent individual or joint experience of migration. It was thought that this migration may have been undertaken at least in part to purchase a house in this area. Colonia Tlaloc was intended to represent an older area, although still one dominated by owner-occupation, where household heads might be old enough to have children who were migrants. A further contrast was provided by San Pedro, a much older and more central neighbourhood, where it was thought there may have been a higher proportion of rental housing. I had anticipated that this distinction in tenure may have been important given the relationship which has often been observed between migrant earnings and house purchase (Dinerman, 1982; González and Escobar, 1990; Massey et al., 1987).

In practice, the differences between the communities were not so distinct as had been expected. Although Villa del Sur was a relatively new area, with construction still taking place in some parts at the time of the fieldwork, it was not comprised wholly or even predominantly of young families. The average age of the households there was in fact slightly higher than in the other two sites at 16.9 years, in relation to 16.6 years in Colonia Tlaloc and 16.0 in San Pedro. These differences in household age were not however statistically significant when compared using the t-test. Many older household heads in Villa del Sur had moved from other parts of Guadalajara, some as part of a tenure shift.


5 Household age was taken to be the length of time since the core couple began living together, or since the core member began to live as a single household head.
from rental to ownership and a few had come from rural areas of Jalisco or from other states.

While *Colonia Tlaloc* had been selected as an older area of settlement, the age of the housing was in fact extremely varied, with some parts very new. Again, there was no uniform age structure of the households. It had been expected that *San Pedro*, as an area of possible rental housing, would contain young families, who as part of a strategy to move from rental to ownership, were participating in recurrent or temporary migration. While there was a higher percentage of rental housing in *San Pedro* than in the other two sites - 32 per cent, compared with nine and 16 per cent in *Villa del Sur* and *Colonia Tlaloc* respectively - many of the household heads were elderly, and owned rather than rented their home.

In terms of the position which the migrants identified in the samples held in their households, all three communities had similar proportions of household heads - 39 per cent in *Villa del Sur*, 37 per cent in *Colonia Tlaloc*, and 34 per cent in *San Pedro*. *San Pedro* had the highest proportion (67 per cent) of migrants who were children of household heads, in direct contrast to what had been expected beforehand, followed by *Colonia Tlaloc* with 61 per cent, and finally *Villa del Sur* with 51 per cent.

With regard to gender, it can be seen from Table 3.1 below that the majority of migrants from migrant households in all three study sites were male. The largest group of migrants in all three areas was that of sons of household heads. Despite the predominance of men, both female household heads and daughters of household heads were also seen to be participating in migration in all three areas.
Table 3.1 Household position of migrants in the study communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Villa del Sur</th>
<th>Colonia Tlaloc</th>
<th>San Pedro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of male household heads amongst migrants</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of female household heads amongst migrants</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of sons amongst migrants</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of daughters amongst migrants</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other household members</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=31</td>
<td></td>
<td>n=41</td>
<td>n=6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While some distinctions could thus be observed between the study communities, there were no obvious differences between the areas which could be seen to influence the involvement of the people who lived in them with the migration process, and hence the research data were analysed collectively rather than on a site-by-site basis. The research sites thus became additive components of a single analysis, rather than three separate case studies. In other words, the research represented what has been termed a 'collective case study'. In research of this nature, several cases are studied jointly in order to inquire into the general phenomenon. The cases themselves are of secondary interest; their function in this context is to provide insight into and facilitate understanding of an issue (Stake, 1994).

Applying this concept of the collective case study to the research on which this thesis is based, people and households with a range of characteristics, in a variety of geographical and tenure situations, and at different stages of the life-cycle, were drawn from across the study sites. The interaction of individuals with the migration process was analysed on the basis of their personal attributes and social position rather than according to where they lived in the city. Although geographical location can in some instances be seen to be interlinked with other variables such as tenure and age, in this case no such relation was observed.

6 In this and all subsequent tables, where the total is not 100, this is due to rounding of the data to the nearest whole number.
3.4.3 Application of the research strategy

The application of the research strategy was characterised by flexibility, and the questionnaire survey and the interviews were conducted in the same time-frame. As must so often be the case, getting started was the biggest challenge. This obstacle was overcome with the help of a local parish priest in Villa del Sur, who put me in contact with members of his church who were willing to participate in the research project. This ‘priestly route’ eventually meant that I had a self-selected group of people with whom to conduct a pilot study of my questionnaire. This was an extremely valuable experience which led to some reassessment of the questionnaire and refinement of the relevant topics to be discussed in the interviews. For instance, to my surprise, most people showed no reluctance to tell me the legal status of migrant members of their households. Several people who took part in the pilot study also agreed to be interviewed, so that the ‘priestly route’ also indirectly initiated the interview component of the methodology as well as the survey.

The questionnaire had been designed with the aid of the usual texts (Fink and Kosecoff, 1985; Moser and Kalton, 1971), but its construction was also informed by the feminist critique of conventional quantitative methods and formulations of ‘the household’ discussed above. Its modification in the field was a response to my experience, through the pilot study, of the social and cultural environment in which I was to conduct the fieldwork proper. For example, it became clear, in asking whether or not each individual household member performed domestic work in the home, that this was sometimes a puzzling and even unwelcome question when applied to male household members, even where the respondent was a woman. After the pilot questionnaire, instead of asking about each person separately, I asked ‘Who does the work in the house?’, so that the respondents told me the specific people who were responsible for such work.

The initial interviews with participants in the pilot study also provided valuable information and insights, some of which I used to modify the questionnaire. It also became clear that most of the interviews produced unsolicited information unconnected to

7 This term was coined by John Salt before the initiation of my fieldwork period; it turned out to be highly apt!
the planned interview schedule, but which I decided to record. Ethically, this practice of discussing ‘tangential’ information corresponded to my aim of opening the agenda to interviewee’s concerns. Later, much of this detail, which seemed irrelevant at the time, provided essential context and pointers to social practices and ideological constructions.

Many of the interview respondents were people who had been willing to participate further after completion of the questionnaire. In these cases, I either conducted the interview immediately, or arranged to come back to discuss further some of the issues which arose in general conversation and during the questionnaire. The questionnaire format is typically regarded as alienating, especially to women (Graham, 1983; McDowell, 1992; Oakley, 1981), but in my experience, perhaps due to the unthreatening nature of most of the questions, it often served as an ‘ice-breaker’, leading to stimulating and informative discussions and interviews later on.

In administering the questionnaire survey, I was quite happy for people to digress if they wished. When questions prompted people to talk about their children or their job, they tended to relax, see the whole encounter as non-threatening, be more expansive in their replies, and often be willing to be interviewed. The informal way I attempted to conduct the survey hopefully made it a mutually more enjoyable experience. Another factor was the familiarity of the respondents with national population censuses, which meant that the questionnaire was not an alien concept for most people with whom I spoke.

A further advantage of the ‘priestly route’ was that in visiting people with whom the priest had put me in contact, I became visible and familiar to other residents of the community. People also knew of my existence and intentions because of the priest’s explanations of my activities in church services. This made the next stage of my research, during which I undertook ‘cold-calling’, much easier. This process of familiarisation was not one-way. Working with people who were expecting me was far less intimidating than approaching

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8 This is not to imply that the questionnaire survey in itself elicited subjective narratives, but that it could be used as a mechanism to provide a ‘way in’ to more intensive and qualitative methods of research, which I suggest initially may be more disconcerting for the respondent than a simple question-and-answer session from a questionnaire.

9 These take place every ten years, although 1995 saw for the first time a mid-census survey designed to collect general information about population size and rates of growth. This survey asked questions similar to but less detailed than those in the decennial census.
people with no introduction, and allowed me to gain confidence in both my language skills and conducting the research itself.

Following the pilot study, a sampling frame was created from which to select randomly households for the questionnaire survey proper. This was achieved in each community by obtaining a map of the study site, broken down into street blocks but not individual buildings, and using this map and random number tables to choose ten per cent of the blocks. I then made rough maps of each randomly selected block, marking all the buildings and noting which ones I judged to be occupied houses. When the maps were completed I listed all the 'houses' and again used random numbers to select houses for the survey. I selected more houses than I wanted to include in the survey, to cover for refusals, buildings wrongly marked as houses, and inability to contact the residents after three attempts.

I used the lists compiled this way in each of the three study sites to carry out a total of 175 questionnaires. Forty three per cent of these were in Villa del Sur, 42 per cent in Colonia Tlaloc and 15 per cent in San Pedro. The smaller proportion of households in the sample which was drawn from San Pedro is a function of the observations made above. In the field, it became apparent that instead of collecting data of a different nature through the questionnaire survey, more data of a similar type were being accumulated. In the context of time constraints, it was decided to cut short the random survey in the third site in order to spend more time on the semi-structured interviews in this and the other two sites.

I carried out 58 interviews with people non-randomly selected from the study communities. Interview respondents were selected on the basis of a number of criteria, including: willingness to participate; personal experience of migration; knowledge and experience of the migration of another household member; and gender - I sought to interview mainly women but also wanted to include some men for a comparison of opinion and experience. Respondents came from both migrant and non-migrant households. I took detailed notes during the interviews, which I wrote up as soon as possible afterwards. I did not however record the interviews, so that whilst I took every care to preserve the original words of the respondents, the quotes in the following chapters are from my interview notes rather than verbatim transcripts.
The main advantage of this flexible multiple methods research strategy in the field was that it allowed interviews to be conducted concurrently with the survey. This meant that I could re-visit potential interviewees to conduct the interview while their interest in the research project was preserved. Moreover, as new lines of inquiry emerged throughout the initial phases of the research period, I could make multiple visits to early respondents to follow up these avenues of investigation, again without too much time elapsing between contacts. In the early phase, which contained the pilot study of the questionnaire and the initial interviews, the methods cross-fed into each other, using knowledge gained from one method to strengthen the other, as described in the discussion of multiple methodologies in the previous section. Coding of questionnaires and the entry of these codes into a spread-sheet data-base continued throughout the research period, as did the writing-up of interviews, as mentioned above.

The same broad research method was applied in each of the three communities, with the main difference being that the 'priestly route' was used only in Villa del Sur. In the other two areas, the sampling frame was constructed, the random selection was made, and then the 'cold-calling' technique was used to request participation in the questionnaire survey. Interviews were then sought via the people I met through conducting the household surveys. The main effect of this difference in method was that the process of familiarisation took longer than in Villa del Sur. While this account may give the impression of a neat progression between the study areas, 'finishing' one and then moving on to the next, the fieldwork was in fact much less orderly than this. In particular, interviews were conducted throughout the fieldwork period, regardless of the study community in which I was conducting a household survey at the time.

3.5 Myself as researcher in the field

One of the common issues raised in feminist research is that of the intersubjectivity between researcher and participant and the mutual creation of data (Olesen, 1994). Feminists (and other proponents of qualitative research) argue that the researcher is part of the research method and can directly affect the outcome of the research. Hence, the gender, age, 'race' and perceived social position of the researcher influence the reactions of the respondents (Harding, 1987; McKee and O'Brien, 1983; Reinharz, 1979). How a
respondent sees the researcher and the research project can have a considerable impact on the content, depth and articulation of the response and indeed on whether or not there is to be a response at all.

In other words, the researcher is not a disembodied data collection instrument but a real person who interacts with the people who are (potential) respondents. Yet ‘these features of interaction are not sources of bias but ... the particular social forces at play in the form of interaction known as social research’ (Reinharz, 1979:85). The fact that the researcher influences the research should not then be seen as a fault or a failure of the research project, but an integral and necessary part of the research process. The charge of bias has largely been levelled by critics of feminist methodology and of qualitative research in general. An issue of great ethical concern within feminist research however, is ‘the uncomfortable question of getting data from respondents as a means to an end’ (Stacey, 1988). In other words, there is a fear that research may be ‘using’ respondents for the gain of the researcher. In this section I present reflections on some of these issues based on my experience of research in Guadalajara.

As a woman, the places where I could contact and communicate with (potential) respondents were geographically different from those of a male researcher. It would not, for instance, have been appropriate for me to attempt to meet potential respondents in a local bar. On the other hand, I feel that my gender gave me increased access to the women I approached in their homes. Had I been a male researcher, these women may have been more wary of inviting me into their house in their partner’s or father’s absence, and it seems more likely that I would have been referred to the male ‘head of household’. For my research project, this would have been an extremely undesirable outcome. Moreover, once I had gained access to women and established a certain degree of rapport, many women spontaneously confided in me on sensitive issues such as domestic violence which I feel it would have been more difficult for them to talk about with a man. As this was not a theme of the research project, it may be argued that such confidences are immaterial, but creating an atmosphere of trust can be very important to the quality of the research.

In interviewing men, my gender had a variable and contradictory effect. Some men seemed to think it a ‘waste of time’ to talk to me, and passed me on to their wives. This
was helpful in gaining access to women, but on occasion made it difficult to obtain a male perspective. Other men appeared to think that precisely because of my lack of importance, it could do no harm to answer my questions. Others still relished the chance to expound their opinions and to quiz me, using me as a link to the academy which they were otherwise largely denied, regardless of my gender. Having said ‘regardless of my gender’, I would like to qualify this statement. What I mean is that such men would have taken the same opportunity to engage in ‘intellectual discussion’ with a male researcher. This does not mean however that my being a woman was ignored. For instance, one man, who debated extensively the content of my questionnaire, also advised me to wear short skirts and low-cut blouses to ‘blend in’ with the surroundings! I find it unlikely that he would have commented on a male researcher’s dress code.

That people saw me as someone with whom to discuss political and other opinions was a reflection of my perceived social status in the research communities. This was by no means fixed, and was related to my gender and age, as well as those of the respondent. Because of my activities, and because I was a ‘rich’ white woman, I was sometimes seen as someone ‘official’ and therefore knowledgeable and invested with a certain degree of authority. This is perhaps the classic image of the survey researcher. It usually meant that people agreed to answer my questions, but sometimes did so somewhat formally and with a certain degree of apprehension and at times even suspicion.

On the other hand, people significantly older than me, particularly women, often seemed to view me as an object of some pity. They saw me as alone, without the support of my family, and sent out by some higher authority to carry out a difficult task in an unfamiliar country. These people were often highly sympathetic, willing to spend a long time talking to me, and very solicitous of my needs, offering me food, drink and even a shoulder to cry on should I need one. Other women, generally those closest to my own age or very much older, seemed to talk with me on a more open basis, with no real connotations of power or inequality on either side.

In my opinion, this affinity came from two sources. With the younger women, it stemmed from a similarity of age and gender, and either the perception of shared experiences, such as being a student, or their desire to enquire about my life-style and contrast it with their own. For older women, I was a patient listener, where others were often scarce, and I was
a woman and could therefore be expected to have some degree of understanding of their experiences. These are of course generalisations, cut across by other factors such as national, 'racial', and class status, education and general ideological background, and there are no simple categories into which people fall simply by virtue of their gender and their age. I do however want to stress that my gender, age and perceived social position interacted with those of the respondents to produce a variety of interview situations. Hence there was not one but many interview scenarios.

Although I do not wish to go into the issue in great depth here, and am in fact unsure of its effects, 'race' was clearly an important factor. I was patently foreign and white and most people assumed I was a gringa, from the United States. In fact many people had no conception of England or Europe, and white often equated with gringa. This is likely to have introduced a great deal of complexity into people's perceptions of me. The US is often viewed as a land of great wealth and opportunity, especially for whites, so that most people must have assumed I was highly privileged. In relation to many of the respondents, I undoubtedly was, so that my social status had undergone a transformation with my translocation to Mexico from the UK. From being an underfunded graduate student I had become a representative of wealth and privilege. This caused some problems with my own identity. The historical connections and conflicts between the US and Mexico are also close to the surface of many Mexican minds. Many Mexicans have a very contradictory relationship with the US, despising some elements of its way of life, such as individualism and erosion of family ties, aspiring to others, especially consumerism and higher standards of living (Alonso, 1988). While I could not say to what degree such images shaped people's perceptions of me, they undoubtedly played some part in some cases.

In terms of the power structures involved in the interview situation, how people saw me clearly had an effect on the outcome. I have indicated above how people related to me in a number of different ways, and this in turn influenced the subjects of our conversations. Women of my own age, for instance, often asked me about my marital status, and about patterns of marriage and fertility in my country (often thought to be the US, despite my explanations to the contrary). The important point to note here is that in most cases I did not experience the 'classic' sense of power over the interviewee which is reported in much of the literature. I would not pretend to know how the respondents
interpreted the interview situation. While I had an interview schedule around which most respondents talked, the emphasis which was placed on its various components varied greatly amongst respondents. Some people moreover introduced their own topics, and we talked extensively around them.

This may be seen as a lack of interview technique on my part - I did not 'control' the interview so that it centred around only the topics that interested me. It could also be interpreted as allowing the respondent to manipulate me and reverse the traditional interviewer/interviewee hierarchy. In a female interviewer/male respondent situation, this issue can be complex and problematic (see, for example, McKee and O'Brien, 1983). I believe it to be less so in a female/female context, although this may not always the case (see Hale, 1991). I feel that not attempting to seize outright control of the interview can be beneficial on both a personal-ethical and a research level. In ethical terms, the selfish and exploitative aspects of data collection are reduced if the respondent has substantial input into the content and direction of the interview. In research terms, a more relaxed and trusting atmosphere may enhance the quality of the information exchanged. As mentioned above, several women, in the course of an interview, seemingly a propos of nothing, told me about their experiences of being physically abused by their partners. While not directly related to the research themes, this did allow me to draw out certain inferences about the nature of gender relations in these households.

In other words, participating in seemingly irrelevant discussions makes interviews feel more like a 'normal' conversation and can also reveal important information. It also makes the interview process more of a mutual, two-way one, rather than being useful only to the researcher. The researcher clearly always has a specific agenda, manifested concretely through the topics which s/he tries to bring into the interview situation. What is less widely recognised is that the respondent also always has an agenda in participating (or not) in the research. The methodologies most widely advocated in feminist research are those which give expression to the agenda of the respondent as well as to that of the researcher, and which show concern for and involvement with the participating persons. It was mentioned above that some respondents seemed to enjoy the chance to engage in discussions. Similar observations have been made elsewhere. In discussing reasons for respondent participation in research, researchers have pointed to:
‘emotional satisfaction’ - the opportunity to express opinions, to experience identification with the researchers, to co-operate with science; ‘intellectual satisfaction’ - for respondents who enjoy discussion and the exchange of ideas but whose daily lives lack intellectual stimulation, the opportunity to be questioned, to think about and respond to new or different topics, can be highly rewarding.
(Richardson et al., 1965 in Reinharz, 1979:79)

While the interview may have been initiated by the researcher, once it is underway the respondent also influences its form, and may derive something from it. To suggest that the researcher is always in control and always the sole beneficiary of research denies the respondent any agency or power of their own. Of course some researchers may play upon their perceived status to introduce power relations which operate in their favour, but sensitive researchers need not be exploitative. Indeed, particularly when a researcher from the ‘developed world’ undertakes research in the ‘developing world’, it is surely more unthinking and imperialistic to cast the respondent as a powerless ‘victim’ than it is to acknowledge that they are also capable of manoeuvring the interview to their own ends.

There is a danger of over-emphasising the positive aspects of the interview situation for the respondent, reconceptualising it as a form of therapy altruistically performed by the researcher. This is clearly not the case; the interview can however be a relatively balanced exchange between both participants.

An approach which involves the exploration of a variety of subjects introduced by both the researcher and the respondent may mean that individual interviews take longer, and the researcher may become involved in social interactions as well as research ones. This may be viewed as wasteful and indulgent, for instance from the point of view of a funding body. But the pay-off is enriched data and also a research method which is at once more enjoyable for both researcher and respondent, and less burdened with the power structures of conventional research which have, deservedly, met with much criticism in feminist discourses.
3.6 Conclusion

I have demonstrated in this chapter how the conceptual framework of the gendered household influenced the methodology employed in the field. The problem of automatically designating a male household head and therefore obscuring women's positions was resolved by assigning joint headship status where the core of the household was a couple. I have also argued that a methodology involving multiple methods and combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques can be beneficial in producing fuller and more rounded data. In other words, the research process can significantly affect the nature and quality of the research output.

A strategy of multiple methods was thus used in the research to gather both subjective data and more objective 'facts' pertaining to the household and the migration experience of its members. This meant that qualitative data which concentrates on personal experiences was complemented by that which aims to portray the larger-scale patterns formed collectively by these individual experiences. The adoption of both quantitative and qualitative research methods was intended to avoid the pitfalls of producing sterile data insensitive to the people they concern and those of focusing purely on personal narratives often viewed as interesting in themselves but marginal to social science as a whole. The techniques were thus complementary, enhancing the strengths and going some way towards overcoming the weaknesses of the same methods used individually.

I have also looked in this chapter at the role of the researcher in the research experience, and have linked this to some of the concerns current in feminist research. It cannot be denied that in conducting face-to-face research, the researcher becomes part of the research. Respondents and potential respondents' perceptions of the researcher affect the responses they give or choose not to give. These perceptions are influenced not just by the characteristics of the researcher, but also by those of the respondent; perhaps still more important is their interaction. The relational nature of the interaction between researcher and researched is thus more complex than that of the traditional dominant/subordinate association often assumed to exist between interviewer and interviewee. Gender, age, class, and 'race' are all important factors, though they have no standard and predictable outcome. The methodology employed was thus also multiple in the sense that the same
research technique used with different people represented a different research experience and produced a different result, owing to the interaction of the individuals involved.

In the following chapter I describe the context in which this methodology was applied. I also present data pertaining to the characteristics of the households and household heads in the sample and to the migration which was occurring and which had occurred from all three study sites in which I worked.
Chapter Four: An urban case-study of migration and its context

4.1 Introduction

Current trends identified in the literature on migration from Mexico to the US include an increasing participation of women in migration and a growth in the number of migrants from urban sending areas in Mexico (Cornelius, 1990a, 1991). In this thesis I explore both these features using the conceptual and methodological frameworks described in the preceding two chapters. I examine the nature and implications of women’s incorporation into the migration stream in subsequent chapters. In this chapter I elaborate the specific context of the city of Guadalajara as the site of my research project. Despite a growing recognition in the literature that urban areas are important sources of migrants to the US (Briody, 1987; Cornelius, 1990a, 1991; López, 1990; Verduzco, 1990), empirical case-studies of such areas are rare. My research was conducted in Guadalajara, the capital city of Jalisco, one of Mexico’s traditional migrant-sending states, and thus addresses this gap in the literature.

Whilst I do not aim to make an explicit comparison of rural- and urban-based migration, it is important to note that the research upon which the thesis is based was conducted in an urban setting, and hence one very different from that in which most previous Mexican migration research has been undertaken. It cannot simply be assumed that the same social and economic impacts associated with migration from rural areas will characterise that which occurs from large urban regions, and it is thus vital that studies of urban migration be conducted. My research project therefore makes a valuable contribution in providing original data in a field where other empirical work is sorely lacking.

In the first section of this chapter I contextualise the research project by summarising the historical background of migration from Mexico to the US and by giving some indication of the contemporary patterns and numerical significance of this aggregate flow. In the second part of the chapter I give an overview of the city of Guadalajara and describe the specific case-study areas. In the third I go on to present some basic information about

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1 For the impact of migration on rural areas, see Alarcón et al., 1987; Arroyo et al., 1991; Cornelius, 1976; Dinerman, 1978, 1982; Goldring, 1992; López, 1986, 1990; Massey et al., 1987; Mines, 1984; Rubenstein, 1992; Trigueros and Rodríguez, 1988.
migration from the study sites. My aim in this section is to illustrate how some of the traits identified in the aggregate migration flow between Mexico and the US can be identified at the meso-level of the study communities. In the final section I present a profile of the heads of household in the random sample and compare and contrast some of the characteristics of migrant and non-migrant households.

4.2 Context

4.2.1 A brief history of Mexican migration to the US

The migration flow between Mexico and the US is both historically significant and of great contemporary concern. It is a highly political issue in the US and although it was deliberately left out of the NAFTA negotiations, there is much speculation as to the likely effects of NAFTA on this migration (e.g. Acevedo and Espenshade, 1992; Bustamante, 1994; Castillo, 1993). Neither can emigration from Mexico be divorced from the issue of the country’s ‘development’ (see for example Massey, 1988).

According to Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, ‘contemporary patterns [of migration] are rooted in historical relationships and shaped by a multitude of political, demographic, socioeconomic, geographic and cultural factors’ (Castles and Miller, 1993:260). In this section I give a brief overview of some of these factors in the US-Mexico context. The history of migration from Mexico to the US can be divided into several phases, as identified by Robin Cohen (1987). The first began with the Guadalupe-Hidalgo treaty of 1848, which ended the US-Mexican war and marked the ceding by Mexico of more than half the territory it had inherited from Spain at Independence in 1821, and lasted roughly until the Great Depression. Cohen makes the valid point that the notion of ‘immigration’ to the US in this period is misconceived, since the Mexican presence in the south-western states goes back further than US ownership. Despite the virtual continuity of the South-West US and Northern Mexico as an economic zone, the seeds of immigration were nonetheless sown at this time through the penetration of US capitalism into Northern Mexico and the dispossession of Mexican land by US farmers.
Douglas Massey et al. (1987) trace the beginnings of out-migration to the economic transformation of Mexico during the Porfirian modernisation period (1872-1911). They argue that the introduction of the hacienda system as a replacement for the ancient system of communal land ownership, the fall in agricultural wages, the rise in food prices and the shift to capital-intensive production methods during this period created a highly mobile mass of impoverished and landless rural labourers, together with a class of dissatisfied urban dwellers. The development of the railways is seen by Massey and his colleagues as an essential complementary condition which provided jobs and a means of transport, at the same time displacing traditional Mexican transport workers and under-cutting the prices of rural craft-workers. The railways thus simultaneously provided the need and the means for migration.

By the time of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, migration to the US was well established, numbering approximately 18,000 people per year (Massey et al., 1987). In the following decade, this annual total rose during periods of revolutionary violence (Cardoso, 1980). The revolution generated considerable uncertainty and conflict amongst both landowners and peasants. Land was confiscated, stolen and taken back, although the threat of breaking up haciendas was not actually carried out during this period (Cohen, 1987).

The egalitarian rhetoric of the Mexican Constitution ... should not obscure the net effects of the revolutionary period. These included a demoralised and defeated peasantry, the continued existence of private property and a dependent, crippled and ineffective labour movement. Together these factors contributed towards large numbers of dispossessed peasants and workers crossing the border into the United States.

(Cohen 1987:47)

When the outbreak of World War I created a labour shortage in the South West of the US, particularly in agriculture, the already well-established migration from Mexico to the US became a large-scale movement. By 1919 the annual number of Mexican immigrants had reached 29,000. When European immigration was reduced by restrictive legislation in 1921, employers in the Midwest and Southwest began actively to recruit Mexican workers. During the 1920s, an average of 49,000 Mexican immigrants entered the US each year (Massey et al., 1987).

With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, a second phase in Mexican-US migration history began. Labour demand in the US was low, and jobs that did exist were given
preferentially to US citizens. Border control was enforced more strictly, and thousands of Mexicans were forcibly deported, while thousands more left voluntarily (Massey et al., 1987). These deportations brought attention to the large number of women migrants in the US (Durand and Massey, 1992). Although the period from 1929 to 1942 marked a temporary halt in the migration flow, the pool of potential migrants in Mexico increased during this time, largely as a result of the Reparto Agrario, the land redistribution reform pursued by Cárdenas (1934-1940). Under this scheme communal ejido lands were set up, but the creation of new ejido land declined after the Cárdenas regime, and small landholders were increasingly left with unproductive plots and little capital or resources to develop it (ibid.). Consequently, when labour demand in the US rose again with its entry into World War II, there was no shortage of Mexican workers to meet it. The period from 1942 to 1964 can be seen as a third phase in the history of migration from Mexico to the US. A temporary worker programme known as the Bracero Programme was established in 1942, and as labour demand remained high after the war, it stayed in place until 1964. By the end of the programme, some 4.5 million Mexicans had worked as braceros in the US, and at its height in the 1950s, more than 400,000 migrated each year (Cornelius, 1978; Morales, 1987). At the same time, there was a general upward trend in the number of undocumented Mexicans entering the US throughout this period (Durand and Massey, 1992). Despite the continuing demand for labour, there were occasional mass deportations of undocumented Mexicans, such as ‘Operation Wetback’ in 1954. It has been argued that while deportations during recession have a certain economic logic, the explanation for those carried out during periods of high labour demand can be sought only at the ideological level of racism, ‘moral panic’ and fears of ‘an alien invasion’. The vendetta against illegal Mexican entrants [at the time of ‘Operation Wetback’] was phrased in what have now become the customary terms of debate - illegals were taking jobs, homes and social security benefits away from indigenous workers. (Cohen, 1987:51-52)

At the end of the Bracero Programme, a fourth phase began, one in which both legal and undocumented migration have continued to grow and one which is often perceived as a

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2 Although this programme was developed during the Cárdenas regime, the first land reform law was in 1915 and became part of the constitution in 1917. Some land reform was undertaken during the 1920s, but the scheme gathered impetus in the 1930s.
definitive turning point in the history of Mexican migration to the US (Bean and Tienda, 1987; Bean et al., 1990a; Cornelius et al., 1982). It has been argued that since the end of the Bracero Programme in 1964 the migration flow has become progressively more heterogeneous, with considerably more migration by whole family units, more migration for family reunification and more migration by single women (Bean, Espenshade et al., 1990; Bustamante, 1989; Cornelius, 1990b, 1991). There has been a shift from a predominantly temporary to an increasingly long-term or permanent Mexican immigrant population in the US and a decline in the proportion of this population employed in agriculture, with correspondingly more being absorbed into the urban service, construction, light manufacturing and retail commerce sectors (Cornelius, 1991). As mentioned above, migrants are being drawn not just from traditional rural sending communities, but also from large urban areas, and their destinations in the US are also showing more signs of dispersal (Durand and Arias, 1993). These trends are relevant to this research project, and will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters. The changes I have identified here reflect a number of factors, one of which is immigration policy. A brief summary of some of the most important policy initiatives since 1965 is thus appropriate here.

4.2.2 US immigration policy since 1965

My focus here is on how US immigration policy has affected Mexican migrants. There are of course migrants of other nationalities who are also affected by this legislation. Mexico however represents the largest single country of birth amongst the foreign-born population of the US (23 per cent according to Current Population Survey [CPS] data for 1988) (Woodrow and Passel, 1990). Moreover some policies, such as the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), were specifically devised with Mexican migrants in mind. In 1965 substantial amendments were made to the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act, abolishing national origins quotas, raising the ceiling on the total number of permanent immigrants allowed, and extending the categories exempt from limitations. Several scholars trace the shift in the predominant national origins of migrants from Europe and Canada to Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean to this period (Bean and Tienda, 1987; Bean et al., 1990a; Castles and Miller, 1993). The result of this shift was that by the period 1985-1989, 65 per cent of all immigrants to the US originated in Eastern and Southeastern Asia or in Central American and the Caribbean (Zlotnik, 1996). The
1965 amendments also gave priority to family reunification, and this has been linked with an increase in female immigration from this time (Houston et al., 1984).

Since 1965, the issue of Mexican immigration has been increasingly problematised and politicised in the US, and there have been numerous attempts to ‘stabilise’ and control the border. For instance, the Border Industrialisation Programme (1965-1973) included the establishment of *maquiladora* industries and was intended to absorb surplus labour, in other words potential migrants, in the border towns. There is considerable debate in the literature as to the success of this venture (*e.g.* Cohen, 1987; Davila and Saenz, 1990; Fernández-Kelly, 1983b). In 1986 IRCA was implemented. The aim was to reduce and control the flow of undocumented immigrants through a three-pronged strategy.

Firstly, a general legalisation or ‘amnesty’ was extended to immigrants who had been illegally but continuously resident in the US since before 1982. A sub-clause granted legal status to some temporary migrants, specifically those working in agriculture, through the Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) programme. Seventy five per cent of those legalised under IRCA were Mexican (Zlotnik, 1996). Secondly, fines on employers of undocumented migrants were introduced in an attempt to reduce the availability of jobs and hence decrease the attractiveness of the US to undocumented migrants, and also to increase the apprehension of undocumented migrants at work. Thirdly, border enforcement was increased, for example through granting more resources to the Border Patrols (Passel et al., 1990). Again, the impacts of this policy initiative are debatable. I discuss some of the possible effects of IRCA in the following section.

While IRCA was directed towards undocumented immigration, the Immigration Act of 1990 was aimed at legal immigrants. It was driven primarily by a concern that US immigration policies did not reflect the shifting economic and labour force needs of the postindustrial period (Calavita, 1994). This Act was a legal reform that once more took family reunification as one of the major grounds for the granting of legal immigrant visas, but it also embodied a commitment to increase the proportion of employment-based visas in the total number granted, responding both to the need to recruit highly-skilled technicians and professionals and to the political demand that US workers be protected from undue competition from foreign labour (Papademetriou, 1992). The family-preference system supports the national ethos of family values, and employment-related
visas are issued as part of the drive towards international competitiveness in the global economy (ibid.). The Immigration Act of 1990 left the total number of family-preference immigration visas essentially unchanged, but represented an attempt to direct the configuration of the migration flow towards that defined as desirable by the US by providing more visas for European immigrants and generally increasing the number of business, investor and employment-linked visas (Castles and Miller, 1993).

In March this year, Congress took up proposals by Senator Simpson and Representative Smith to deal with legal and illegal immigration. Measures to reduce illegal immigration were approved, among them enacting new penalties for alien smuggling, building a triple fence along 14 miles of the Mexican border and strengthening the Border Patrol. A so-called 'Proposition 187' amendment that would permit states to deny public education to the children of undocumented immigrants and prohibit states from offering federally financed welfare benefits to 'illegal aliens' was also approved. In contrast, the proposed reductions and changes in the legal immigration system, including reducing the annual number of visas available for family reunification and imposing fees on US employers who want to admit immigrants to fill jobs, were voted against⁴. A similar bill was passed in a 97-3 Senate vote on 2 May 1996. This Senate bill must now be reconciled with the House bill decided by Congress in March. The two bills are largely the same, except for provisions in the House bill to impose restrictions on asylum seekers and to allow states to withhold public schooling for undocumented immigrants⁴.

National directives aimed at controlling immigration have been followed by individual state initiatives. Proposition 187 (also known as SOS - Save Our State) was originally formulated in California in response to public protests at the perceived burden of immigrants on public funds. It:

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3 Electronic mailing of Migration News, 3(4).

was the culmination of the work of a loose network of newly formed local grass roots organisations who tapped into real public fear and discontent with the declining quality of life in California. Using a rhetoric of ‘invasion’ and ‘takeover’ tinged with a racist patina, they directed this fear toward new immigrants, focusing generally on Latinos and particularly those from Mexico. (Smith and Tarallo, 1995:665)

Proposition 187 aims to deny undocumented immigrants and their children access to public education, non-emergency medical care and welfare. As a means of achieving this, Proposition 187 requires that all persons seeking cash assistance and other benefits verify their legal status before receiving such benefits, and all service providers are required to report suspected illegal aliens to California’s Attorney General and to the INS. Moreover, the making, distribution and use of false documents to obtain public benefits or employment by concealing one’s legal status is now a state felony, punishable by fines and prison terms (Martin, 1995).

Although its legal future remains uncertain, Proposition 187 is nevertheless symbolic of the rising tide of public hostility towards immigrants. Similar demands have been made elsewhere, for instance by campaigners from several grassroots organisations in Florida and Arizona. These demands may not be as successful elsewhere as they have been in California, since it has been argued that different political, economic and cultural constructions of ‘the border’ have differently mediated anti-immigrant politics in California, Arizona and Texas, producing quite different regimes of racial incorporation and exclusion (Smith and Tarallo, 1995).

These recent policies or calls for change in the levels of immigration may reflect rising levels of protectionism, racism and xenophobia in the US population. They are also based however on the perception and fear of permanent settlement by (Mexican and non-Mexican) immigrants who are thought to increase the unemployment rates of local workers, drive down wage levels and represent an excessive burden on the welfare state. It may be argued that such perceptions of the effects of immigration are misplaced.


7 The impacts of immigration on the US, particularly on its labour market, continue to be debated. See for example Beck (1995) and Borjas et al. (1996).
Jorge Bustamante (1995) depicts 'circularity' as a major characteristic of the macro-scale Mexican migration flow to the US. Legislation which recognises only permanent immigration is thus founded on a misrepresentation of the real situation. I will show later in this chapter that this process of 'circularity' or return migration can also be seen to operate at the micro-level of the household sample carried out during this research.

4.2.3 Mexican immigration and numbers

One of the major debates in the US revolves around the numerical significance of the migration flow, particularly its undocumented component, from Mexico. Undocumented migration is by definition invisible and therefore unobservable. Estimates have had to be made using surrogate variables and indirect methods of measurement. This has resulted in a wide range of vastly different estimates, with scholars criticising each others' methods for their inaccuracy and inbuilt distortions. The argument is not a new one: one of the aims of Manuel Gamio's work in the 1920s was to disprove the widely-held notion that as many as a million Mexicans were living in the US by 1929 (Gamio, 1930 repr.1971). In contemporary terms, the US Bureau of the Census put the total inflow of undocumented migrants at around 200,000 per year in 1990, and the 'illegally' resident population in the range of 2 million to 3.5 million, with the Mexican component representing somewhere between two thirds and three quarters of this total (Papademetriou, 1992).

More recently, Douglas Massey and Audrey Singer (1995) used a new source of data, comprising a combination of random samples in both migrant sending and destination communities and Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) apprehension statistics, to estimate that in the 25 years up to 1990 there were 36.5 million entries to the US by undocumented Mexicans. They found that the gross inflow of undocumented Mexicans grew by an average of 20 per cent a year between 1965 (the year after the Bracero Programme was ended) and 1978, when it reached nearly 1.5 million entries per year. This figure levelled off until the onset of the Mexican crisis in the 1980s initiated another period of rapid expansion, which peaked at 3.8 million in 1986 (the year that IRCA was introduced). The average annual number of entries then fell into the 2.5 to 3 million range between the years 1986 and 1990. At the same time, the analysis of Massey and Singer revealed a strong return flow which substantially offset the inflow of undocumented Mexican migrants, such that over the 25 year period studied, 86 per cent of all entries...
were counterbalanced by departures, leaving a net inflow of only 5.2 million. This underlines the point made above, that despite a tendency towards increased permanency on the part of some migrants, a significant flow of return migration persists.

The figures presented above suggest that the number of undocumented entries fell after the introduction of IRCA in 1986. Yet the effects of IRCA were not as clearcut as this suggests. A comprehensive study of the impact of employer sanctions on undocumented border crossings concluded that the initial reduction in INS apprehensions was less a product of sanctions than a predictable consequence of IRCA's legalisation provisions (Crane et al., 1990). Wayne Cornelius (1990b) also argues that IRCA had only a small depressive effect on the existing flow of undocumented migration from rural Mexican communities and that this was more than compensated by a new flow of undocumented migrants, particularly women and children, going to join newly legalised immigrants in the US. Neither did IRCA produce a massive return flow of undocumented migrants who did not qualify for legalisation. In fact, Cornelius suggests that through its legalisation programme IRCA effectively reinforced a long-term trend towards more permanent settlement.

Since its implementation, IRCA's amnesty programme has been responsible for the legalisation of some 2.7 million immigrants and a further 142,000 family members of newly legal residents have been admitted under a special programme. Seventy per cent of applications for the general legalisation programme (LAW) were from Mexicans, and Mexicans also accounted for 82 per cent of applications under the special agricultural worker (SAW) scheme (Bean, Vernez and Keely, 1989). The approval rate of the LAW scheme was almost 98 per cent, that of the SAW programme some 94 per cent (ibid.).

The analysis of Karen Woodrow and Jeffrey Passel (1990) also indicates a change in the composition of the undocumented population. Firstly, they point to a decrease in the Mexican proportion of this undocumented population. They estimated that 75 per cent of Mexicans in the US in 1988 were legal residents, compared to only 40 per cent before IRCA. Secondly, they point to a large increase in the proportion of undocumented female immigrants, who made up 60-80 per cent of the total undocumented population according

8 CISNEWS mailing of 1/4/96 citing PRNewswire 29 March 1996.

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to the 1988 Current Population Survey, as opposed to only 45 per cent in the 1980 Census. This gender shift is explained with reference to the disproportionately male composition of the newly legalised population, especially in the SAW scheme. This supports the assertions of Cornelius, discussed above, and receives further corroboration in the work of Frank Bean et al. (1990b).

It seems that rather than causing a simple reduction in the undocumented population and in the undocumented migration flow, the impacts of IRCA were in fact complex, and at times contradictory. On the one hand, the number of undocumented migrants in the US was decreased by the legalisations of the LAW and the SAW programmes. Employer sanctions may have discouraged undocumented labour migration to a certain extent (although this has also been contested), but at the same time there was an increased tendency of undocumented migrants to remain longer in the US once they had succeeded in entering to avoid the risks of repeated border crossing (Bean, Espenshade et al., 1990). Furthermore, IRCA may have led to changes in the gender and age composition of both the migration flow and the immigrant population, as a result of increasing numbers of women and children migrating to be reunited with male migrants legalised under IRCA. This shift may in turn have had effects on the length of time spent by immigrants in the US, consolidating the pre-existing tendency towards more settled immigration.

4.2.4 The Mexican perspective

It is not just the US which is concerned with migration from Mexico. Mexican investigators have made their own attempts to measure undocumented migration. As in the US, official statistics on border crossings are inadequate (García y Griego, 1987) and indirect methods of investigation have been devised (e.g. Bustamante, 1990; Corona, 1987 and Díez, 1984, both cited in Durand and Massey 1992). The most widely publicised source of Mexican data on the undocumented migration phenomenon is the Encuesta Nacional de Emigración a la Frontera Norte y a los Estados Unidos (ENEFNEU) survey conducted in 1978-1979 by the Mexican government institute Centro Nacional de Información y Estadísticas del Trabajo (CENIET).9

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Mexican interest in migration is not however limited to measuring the flow and neither is it directed only towards Mexican outflows to the US. Since the 1960s, Mexican migration policy makers have been particularly concerned about the emigration of Mexican workers to the US and the in-migration of South and Central American workers (Bustamante et al., 1992). According to Manuel Garcia y Griego (1992), Mexico has traditionally taken the position of opposing in principle the outflow of its workers to the US, especially of its skilled workers; however, realising that emigration will continue (as a reflection of underlying economic and social conditions), the government has concentrated on protecting the human rights and labour conditions of Mexicans working abroad. In relation to South and Central American immigration, Mexico has tried to maintain the status of a safe haven for political refugees while seeking to restrict the entry of economic migrants. This places Mexican migration policy in a somewhat contradictory position considering its attitude towards the economic migration of Mexicans to the US (see also Casillas, 1996).

Just as research in the US has looked at the impacts of immigration on the US economy and society, research in Mexico has concentrated on the effect of emigration on social and economic development in Mexico. Community studies, by both Mexican and non-Mexican researchers, have generally concluded that US earnings are spent overwhelmingly on current consumption, leaving little money for productive investment (Durand and Massey, 1992). Yet there are some studies which question this mainstream view (e.g. Escobar and Martínez, 1990; Trigueros and Rodríguez, 1988). Whilst this thesis does not address directly the issue of migration and development, it is important to recognise the link. Increasingly, especially in view of NAFTA, these issues are linked to the growing labour market interdependence of the two countries (see Bustamante, 1994; Bustamante et al., 1992) and it is argued that 'sooner rather than later a binational approach to migration in the context of an increasingly integrated labour market will be essential' (Bustamante et al., 1992:18).

4.3 Guadalajara and the study sites

As stated above, one of the characteristics of Mexican migrants that has recently been observed is their increasingly urban background (Cornelius, 1990a, 1991). My choice of the setting for my research project was derived from this increasingly urban nature of the
migration process and the lack of empirical studies of urban migrant-sending areas. I saw the city of Guadalajara as presenting an appropriate combination of the ‘traditional’, in the sense that it was located in a state with a well-established history of migration to the US, and the ‘urban’, being the capital of Jalisco and Mexico’s second largest city. In the first part of this section I provide a brief summary of the history of the city. As mentioned previously, my research project was carried out in three low-income neighbourhoods of Guadalajara. In the previous chapter I recounted the selection of these sites; here I give a more detailed description of the study sites themselves, my aim being to give an impression of the nature of the research communities.

4.3.1 Guadalajara

Guadalajara was founded in 1532, but it was the late eighteenth century before the development of transport links and agriculture gave the city any real commercial importance (Gilbert and Varley, 1991). Economically, the pattern of small, family-run enterprises, initiated towards the end of the eighteenth century, persisted until the 1960s (Alba, 1985). Since then several major high-technology national and trans-national firms, such as Kodak, Motorola, Cigarrea, Mexicana and IBM have changed the commercial structure of the city by establishing factories here (Gabayet and Lailson, 1990; Vázquez, 1985). They were attracted by the large regional market, the favourable urban environment, local authority incentives, and Guadalajara’s reputation for peaceful industrial relations (Arias, 1985; Walton, 1977, cited in Gilbert and Varley, 1991).

Yet small-scale activities still employ more than half the manufacturing work-force, and continue to produce ‘traditional’ consumer products such as shoes, processed foods and soft drinks (Escobar and Martínez, 1990; Gilbert and Varley, 1991). The production of basic consumer goods (‘traditional industry’) and the production of intermediate and capital goods (‘dynamic industry’) coexist in the contemporary economy of Guadalajara (Arias, 1985). The labour market of Guadalajara has been described as segmented, with the type of work and the level of income available differentiated according to age, sex, and level of education (González de la Rocha, 1986).
With a population of 3,278,968 (INEGI, 1995), Guadalajara is Mexico’s second largest city. Map 4.1 illustrates its location in Mexico. More than half the population of the state of Jalisco lives in the Zona Metropolitana de Guadalajara (metropolitan region of Guadalajara), which comprises the municipios of Guadalajara, Zapopan, Tlaquepaque and Tonalá (INEGI, 1995). The city’s most rapid population growth occurred during the last half century, with an annual growth rate of 5.7 per cent between 1940 and 1980. During this period, this growth represented an eleven-fold increase in the size of the population, and a similar expansion of the land area of the city (Vázquez, 1985). Internal rural-urban migration has contributed significantly to this growth, although it is difficult to ascertain exactly how much, since in the Mexican Census, only those people born outside the state are classified as migrants, which means rural-urban migration within states is ignored (Gilbert and Varley, 1991). It has been suggested that the population increase of Guadalajara in the period 1940 to 1970 was in fact largely due to migration from rural and semi-urban areas of Jalisco (Arroyo and Velázquez, 1982).

This rapid population growth, whatever its source, has led to a transformation of the city. Alan Gilbert and Ann Varley (1991) describe the shift from a neo-colonial centre to an urban agglomeration with extensive suburbs and industrial zones. The peak expansion of the city’s built-up areas took place in the 1960s, when the outlying towns of Tlaquepaque and Zapopan were absorbed into the urban fabric of the rapidly growing city. At the same time, there was a major growth of middle-class areas in the west and north-west. Since the 1960s, the popularity of low-density suburbs has increased, and major commercial sub-centres have emerged to serve higher-income populations. Low-income settlements have sprung up in new areas, and now form a virtually continuous periphery around the south, east and north of the city, adding to the ‘traditional’ working-class neighbourhoods to the east of the city centre. Plates 4.1 to 4.4 give some views of the historic city centre. In the following section I look more specifically at the study communities.

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10 This figure is for the Zona Metropolitana de Guadalajara - the figure for the municipio of Guadalajara alone is 1,632,521.
Map 4.1 Mexico: location of the state of Jalisco and the city of Guadalajara

Source: INEGI (1992)
Plate 4.1 The cathedral, Guadalajara

Plate 4.2 Monument in Guadalajara city centre
Plate 4.3  View of the cathedral from Plaza de las Laureles

Plate 4.4  Teatro Degollado and Plaza de las Armas
4.3.2 The study sites

The random sample of a total of 175 households was drawn from three different study sites, as described more fully in Chapter Three, with 43 per cent coming from Site One, Villa del Sur, 42 per cent from Site Two, Colonia Tlaloc, and 15 per cent from Site Three, San Pedro. The locations of these communities in the city can be seen on Map 4.2.

a) Villa del Sur

This community was made up of five small colonias in the south-west of Guadalajara, just off one of the city’s main highways. The area falls within the municipio of Zapopan, and the colonias are located in the ejido of Santa Ana Tepetitlán. The area was generally in an advanced phase of tenure regularisation. Most of the study site was established approximately 15 years before the research took place, though one colonia was slightly older. It was described by a local priest as being a ‘disjointed community, mostly made up of people from Jalisco [outside Guadalajara] and neighbouring states’. The majority of the streets were unpaved, although there were some road surfacing projects underway at the time of the fieldwork. Part of the community was cut through by a polluted arroyo (stream). This had only irregular, makeshift bridges, and was seen by many residents as dirty, smelly and inconvenient. A drainage project in this area was also being carried out during the research period. Between 90 and 95 per cent of the houses had piped water and drainage, and 100 per cent had electricity (Jesús and López, 1994). An adjacent Catholic seminary with several priests served a majority of the residents in this area; there were also schools, small grocers and general convenience stores, a dentist, and at least one hairdresser. The main road which bisected the area was lined with small shops, workshops and places to eat. At one edge of the area, next to the arroyo, was a cluster of small factories and workshops. Once a week a small street market took place, and at other times, many people, mostly women, set up small stalls outside their homes to sell food items. The mean age\(^{11}\) of households in the sample was 17 years, and 81 per cent of houses in the sample were owner-occupied. On average, female heads of household in this area were 39 years old, while male heads were 41. Plates 4.5 to 4.8 are photographs of this research site.

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11 Household age is defined as the length of time since the current household heads began to live together as owners or tenure-holders of their house, or in the case of one-person headship, since that person assumed ownership or tenure of their house.

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Map 4.2 Guadalajara: location of the research communities

Source: Gilbert and Varley (1991)
Plate 4.5 A ‘typical’ house in Villa del Sur

Plate 4.6 Houses and pipe-laying in Villa del Sur
Plate 4.7 Hairdressing salon, Villa del Sur

Plate 4.8 Children crossing the arroyo in Villa del Sur
b) Colonia Tlaloc
Located towards the south of the city, in the municipio of Guadalajara, this area was also close to a main road. It was near one of Guadalajara's large industrial areas, and bordered a modern shopping complex, which included a supermarket. Within the study area, there was a clearly defined shopping street, with a larger range of shops than was to be found in Villa del Sur, though a weekly street market also took place here. More of the streets here were paved, though drainage could be a problem in the rainy season, and in general this area had a more consolidated air to it than did Villa del Sur. Having said this, the study area did encompass a range of housing, with one area in particular relatively new and unconsolidated. Though by no means on the outer limits of the city, this community appeared to be 'urban' in places, due to the presence of a large swathe of grazing and agricultural land. The mean household age in the sample in this community was 17, although households had spent an average of only seven years in the community. The newer parts of the study area were between eight and ten years of age, the older areas 15 to 20. Most had water, drainage and electricity. For some visual impressions of this area, see plates 4.9 to 4.12. Seventy-nine per cent of households surveyed owned their own house. For female household heads, the average age was 38 years; for males it was 41.

c) San Pedro
This area was much older than the other two, and lay between the city centre and an area of high-income housing. With paved streets, many shops and small businesses, busy roads and much less open space, this community was the most typically 'urban' or inner-city. The streets were laid out regularly in the rectilinear style characteristic of the more central areas of Guadalajara, though there was much variation between houses in terms of size and quality. The mean household age was 16 years, with households having spent an average of 12 years in the study area. Again, the majority - 77 per cent - of the houses were owner-occupied. The mean age of household heads was slightly higher than in the other two areas: for female heads it was 48, for male heads 44. Some views of San Pedro can be seen in Plates 4.13 to 4.16.
Plate 4.9 Street in *Colonia Tlaloc*

Plate 4.10 ‘Rurban’ fringe, *Colonia Tlaloc*
Plate 4.11 Market day in *Colonia Tlaloc*

Plate 4.12 Making *tortillas*, *Colonia Tlaloc*
Plate 4.13 Street scene, San Pedro

Plate 4.14 House, San Pedro
Plate 4.15  Street vendor, *San Pedro*

Plate 4.16  Church, *San Pedro*
4.4 Migration from the study sites

I found that 11 per cent of households in the random sample had at least one member in the US who had been there for a period of at least six months, at the time of the survey. These migrants (35 in total) are henceforth termed *current migrants*. In addition, 13 per cent of all households surveyed contained at least one member who had migrated to the US for a period of at least six months since the formation of the household, and who had since returned. These migrants are to be known as *return migrants* (43 people). Taking all those households which had either one or more current migrants, or one or more return migrants, as *migrant households*, 19 per cent of households in the sample can be classified as such. These migrant households together accounted for a total of 78 migrants. Five per cent of households contained both current and return migrants. Conversely, *non-migrant households* were defined as those which did not fulfil the criteria of the migrant household definition.

These figures show that roughly a fifth of all households in the random sample have had one or more members migrate to the US. Although this may not match some of the high figures collected for rural migrant-sending communities, it does represent a substantial proportion of the sample population, indicating that the phenomenon of international migration is widespread in the urban study sites. While data from urban case-studies of migration are rare, as I emphasised earlier, figures which are available suggest that such a finding is not unusual. In a study conducted in Zamora, Michoacán, for example, Gustavo Verduzco (1990) found that 14 per cent of workers interviewed in a labour force survey had been to the US at least once. A 1976 survey of six secondary cities of Jalisco found that the percentage of families with relatives who had migrated to the US in the previous five years fell in the range of eight to 17 per cent (Arroyo, 1985).

The figures above pertaining to my research relate to migration which has occurred from the households in the survey since household formation. In addition, 14 per cent of these

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12 In 1982 Douglas Massey *et al.* (1987) surveyed two rural areas, one in Jalisco, the other in Michoacán, and found that 52 per cent of households in the former, and 75 per cent in the latter, contained members with US migrant experience. Similarly, a survey conducted in a small agricultural town in Michoacán in 1982 revealed that more than three-quarters of households contained at least one individual who had lived in the US (Alarcón, 1992). A still higher figure of 82 per cent of households is claimed for another village in Michoacán (López, 1986).
households have individual members whose experience of migration to the US pre-dates the formation of the respondent household. Seventy-six per cent of these migrations originated in Guadalajara, and nine per cent in other urban areas, including Mexico City. Only 15 per cent were initiated in rural areas. This further supports the assertion that urban-based migration is important. Altogether, 33 per cent of the households in the sample have at least one member with experience of US migration, and the majority of these migrations originated in Guadalajara. This compares with the findings of the limited amount of previous research. For instance, in their 1982 survey of a working-class area of Guadalajara, Douglas Massey et al. (1987) concluded that 31 per cent of households had members with US migrant experience.

In 22 per cent of households, either the male or the female household head, or both, have migrated to the US at some stage in their lives, and 16 per cent of household heads in the sample have one or more children who are or who have been migrants to the US. This made for a total of 95 migrant children, 38 per cent of them daughters and 62 per cent sons. Almost half (45 per cent) of the household heads were also said to have either immediate or close\(^{13}\) relatives with US migration experience, and 42 per cent of respondents mentioned other migrant relatives, either more distantly related or with whom the respondent had lost contact. These data point to the fact that migration to the US occurs across several generations, and also suggests that many urban households are part of, or potentially part of, the social networks which have been seen to perpetuate migration (see, for example, Boyd, 1989; Lomnitz, 1977; Massey, 1986,1990).

Since migration from urban areas of Mexico to the US is generally seen as a relatively new process, the density of migrant networks which exist may at first glance seem surprising. A logical expectation would be that, since urban migration generally has not had the long tradition of rural migration, there has been insufficient time for the establishment, consolidation and expansion of effective migrant networks. Yet this does not appear to be the case - almost half of the household heads in the sample claimed to have relatives with US migrant experience, and of these \textit{relative migrants}, as they are

\(^{13}\) Immediate relatives include mother, father, sister, brother, but not daughter or son, who are treated as a separate category. Close relatives are defined by the respondent, and typically include cousins, aunts and uncles. The category of close relative excludes those people who fall into the immediate relative category.
henceforth termed, about whom further information was collected (184 in all, 44 per cent of them women, 56 per cent men), 88 per cent were in the US at the time of the survey. This suggests that households in the urban study sites were in fact linked to the US through social networks, which could potentially be used to help further migration in the same manner as that which has been observed with regard to rural-based migration.

There are two explanations for this apparent anomaly. The first is that although the academic recognition of urban migration occurred mainly in the late 1980s/early 1990s, the phenomenon itself dates back to the early 1970s (Briody, 1987; Cornelius, 1990a, 1991). Seven per cent of migrants from migrant households in the sample began their migration 20 or more years ago. Furthermore, 19 per cent of the relative migrants about whom detailed information was collected, and who left from urban areas, migrated 20 or more years ago. The second is that urban migration is linked via social networks to rural migration which may have a longer tradition. In other words, due to the relatively recent development of parts of Guadalajara, including (two of) the study communities, respondent households may retain strong links to kin in rural regions, particularly since nearly half the household heads in the sample were born in rural areas (see below). Speaking to this idea is the fact that 36 per cent of the relative migrants migrated from rural areas. The suggestion is then, that migration from rural areas is linked to, and may facilitate, migration from urban areas through expanding access to social networks in the US.

In the discussion above I have emphasised that the urban study communities are important sources of migrants to the US, thus confirming at the micro-level what has been noted previously at the macro-level. Similarly, the phenomenon of return migration, noted above as an important component of the total flow, is also apparent in the study sites. As mentioned earlier, 13 per cent of households were seen to contain return migrants who had migrated since the formation of the respondent household. In addition, 14 per cent of households had members who had been return migrants before the household was formed. This is indicative of a substantial degree of circularity. Hence, while some migrants may settle more or less permanently in the US, others undertake temporary migration. I suggest

14 The corresponding figure for those who migrated from a rural area was 22 per cent. Of all the relative migrants about whom such information was collected (184 in all), 20 per cent left 20 or more years ago.
that the total migration flow is made up of two distinct and parallel flows, one of temporary migrants, the other of longer-term or permanent migrants. I will develop this theme in subsequent chapters.

Mexican migrant destinations historically have been spatially clustered in the south-west of the US, particularly in the states of California and Texas (Jones, 1981,1988). Jesús Arroyo et al. (1991) cite data collected by the Mexican Consejo Nacional de Población which show that 91 per cent of undocumented migrants from Jalisco who were deported by the US authorities in December 1994 were apprehended in California, compared with 55 per cent for all Mexican migrants. This suggests that migrants from Jalisco may be particularly channelled towards California. Yet just as a recent diversification of migrant origins has been recorded, so too has a dispersal of migrant destinations (Durand and Arias, 1993). The recent growth in the number of Mexicans in New York City is particularly noteworthy (Sassen and Smith, 1992). The increase in illegal immigration from Mexico to Florida has also attracted comment15. These patterns of dispersal may reflect change in the US demand for labour and the effects of IRCA and its family reunification policy (ibid.). The potential implementation of Proposition 187 in California, which aims to deny free education, non-emergency medical services and public assistance (welfare) to undocumented immigrants and their children, may also recently have shifted part of the Mexican migration flow to other US States.

In contrast to the trend of diversification noted above, data from the study communities show that California was still the dominant migrant destination. It is worthwhile mentioning here that the tables below are based on data gathered in 1994, before Proposition 187, so that they are not able to reflect any potential effects which this proposed legislation may have had on the destinations of migrants. As can be seen from Table 4.1, 85 per cent of all migrants from migrant households went to the state of California, while other destinations were relatively unimportant.

Table 4.1 US destination of all migrants from migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US state</th>
<th>% of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=78

While no statistics were gathered on the specific destination within states, from general observations and from word of mouth it would be safe to say that the majority of migrants were in, or had been in, Los Angeles. The probable metropolitan destination of a majority of migrants from the study communities is consistent with research which points to a channelling of Mexican migration towards large urban areas in the US, especially in the west (Vemez and Ronfeldt, 1991). This pattern also presents an interesting contrast to the classic link between the non-metropolitan source region and the metropolitan destination (Jones, 1984). Here, migrants are moving between two large urban conglomerations, signifying a new form of movement: that which is at the same time inter-metropolitan and international. Migration from Guadalajara to Los Angeles thus represents a new link in the chain of connections between the neighbouring countries.

From Table 4.2 it is clear that California is also the dominant destination of ‘relative migrants’.

Table 4.2 US destination of ‘relative migrants’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US state</th>
<th>% of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=163

This concentration of migrants from the study communities and ‘relative migrants’ in California, and particularly in Los Angeles, may be a further factor facilitating the rapid development of social networks linking migrant source regions and destinations. In turn
the consolidation and expansion of these networks encourages further migration to the same region, so that the migration flow to California persists despite the dispersal of some migrants to new destination areas.

In this section I have established that international migration from the study sites, located in the metropolis of Guadalajara, is a significant and ongoing process, one with which almost a fifth of households in the survey have been directly involved at some stage since their formation through the migration of at least one member. A substantial proportion of this migration was return migration. Extending the remit temporally, to include migrations which occurred before the formation of the respondent household, one-third of the household sample has one or more members with US migration experience. In a geographic expansion outside the household, nearly half the household heads have close or immediate relatives with migration experience, the vast majority of them current migrants, demonstrating a strong connection between the study communities and social contacts in the US. The predominant destination of all migrants was California. The patterns identified here at the micro-level of the study communities reflect in large degree those distinguished in the literature at the macro-level, discussed earlier in this chapter. The exception is that there is little sign of increasing variety in the destinations of the migrants from the study sites, in contrast to the general dispersal in the US of Mexican migrants.

4.5 The household sample

In 85 per cent of the 175 households in the random sample, the respondent was female, in 13 per cent male, and in two per cent, two or more respondents, of both sexes, participated. That the majority of respondents was female is the result of two factors, one ideological, the other more pragmatic. The first is the deliberate decision to reverse the conventional stance of assuming a male household head and seeking information only from him by actively directing most questionnaires to female heads of household where possible. This decision also reflects the nature of the research project, with its focus on gender roles and women’s experiences. The second is that since most questionnaires were conducted during the day, when many men were working outside the home, more women tended to be available and willing to participate in the survey. I believe that this factor was
compounded by the fact that I myself am female. The respondent was a household head according to the definition adopted in 85 per cent of cases; 13 per cent of the respondents were the daughter or son of the household heads, and two per cent were other relatives of the household heads.

In this section I present some of the characteristics of the household heads in the sample, to give a general impression of the people living in the study communities. Since the unit of analysis of the gendered household approach is the household, I then give further details of the 175 households in the sample, at the same time comparing and contrasting migrant and non-migrant households.

4.5.1 Household heads

The mean age of female household heads in the sample was 40 and that of males 41. Ninety per cent of female, and 98 per cent of male household heads were married or in a union libre (co-habiting). Seven per cent of female household heads were widowed, divorced, or separated. Only one male household heads was identified as being in this position. The average number of children of household heads was four.

Almost half of all household heads were born in rural areas. Table 4.3 classifies the place of birth of household heads in the sample. Since only 10 per cent of households in the sample were formed in rural areas, this suggests that many individual household heads participated in internal rural-urban migration before their incorporation into the respondent household. Jalisco was by far the most common state of birth for both male and female household heads - 70 per cent of male, and 67 per cent of female, household heads were born here. Other significant states of origin were Zacatecas (12 per cent of both female and male household heads were born here) and Michoacán (seven per cent and six per cent for male and female household heads respectively).
Table 4.3 Place of birth of household heads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>% of female household heads</th>
<th>% of male household heads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural area</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadalajara</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other urban area</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=72 n=155

Of the female household heads surveyed, the majority (74 per cent) were full-time homemakers. The next largest category (14 per cent) was employed, and eight per cent were self-employed. Of the female household heads who did have paid work, most worked in service occupations. Sixty-one per cent of male household heads were employed, and 25 per cent were self-employed. Tables 4.4 and 4.5 give details of the occupations and sectors of employment of male and female household heads surveyed. It is interesting to note that the only occupations commonly undertaken by both male and female household heads are those related to selling.

Table 4.4 Occupation of household heads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>% of female household heads</th>
<th>% of male household heads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled worker</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled worker</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesperson, including</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>street trader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic worker</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service worker</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=38 n=133
Table 4.5 Sector of employment of household heads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector of employment</th>
<th>% of female household heads</th>
<th>% of male household heads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=37 n=132

A majority of both male and female household heads had completed some or all of their primary education (1-6 years of schooling). Male heads of household had a slightly higher mean number of years of education - seven, as compared to six for female household heads. When the educational level of men and women is compared using the t-test, this small difference is seen to be statistically insignificant. The small observable difference is probably due to the fact that more male than female household heads had education beyond the prepa stage (which follows secondary education and precedes college or university), since for the stages up to and below this, male and female participation in education was very similar, as can be seen from Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Educational level of household heads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education reached</th>
<th>% of female household heads</th>
<th>% of male household heads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (1-6 years)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (7-9 years)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepa (10-12 years)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further (13 or more years)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=169 n=153
4.5.2 Migrant and non-migrant households

In this section I look at some of the comparative characteristics of migrant and non-migrant households. To recap, migrant households were defined as those that had either current migrants or return migrants or both, as members. In terms of tenure, a clear majority of all the homes in the sample were owned, while a smaller proportion were rented and a few were held in other forms of tenure, which most often meant a loan from a relative. As can be seen from Table 4.7, a greater proportion of migrant households were owner-occupied, but overall there was no real difference between the tenure of migrant and non-migrant households.

Table 4.7 Tenure of migrant and non-migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Migrant households (%)</th>
<th>Non-migrant households (%)</th>
<th>All households (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupier</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=34 n=141 n=175

χ² = 2.966 with 2 degrees of freedom

H₀: There is no significant difference between migrant and non-migrant households in terms of their tenure.

Most households were headed by a couple, and where the headship was held by just one person, it was far more likely to be a woman than a man - 10 per cent of all households had a female head, only one per cent a male head, as can be seen from Table 4.8. Migrant households were slightly more likely than non-migrant households to be couple-headed.

16 The significance level for this and all subsequent statistical tests is 0.05.

17 To reiterate, the person(s) who have ownership or tenancy of the building housing the household is/are the household head(s). Where the tenure is held by one person, but this person has a spouse or partner, both are defined as joint household heads.
Table 4.8 Headship of migrant and non-migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrant households (%)</th>
<th>Non-migrant households (%)</th>
<th>All households (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couple-headed</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-headed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male-headed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=34  n=141  n=175

Migrant and non-migrant households could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

The nuclear household was dominant in the study sites, although other household formations also existed. As Table 4.9 demonstrates, there was no clear difference between migrant and non-migrant households in terms of their structure, though a somewhat higher proportion of migrant households were nuclear.

Table 4.9 A comparison of migrant and non-migrant household types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household type</th>
<th>Migrant households (%)</th>
<th>Non-migrant households (%)</th>
<th>All households (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear (couple-headed)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended (couple-headed)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended (woman-headed)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=33  n=142  n=175

Migrant and non-migrant households could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

In terms of household age, meaning the length of time since the formation of the respondent households, migrant households have a substantially higher mean age, at 26 years, than do the non-migrant households, at 14 years. A comparison of the mean ages using the t-test confirms the difference as statistically significant. The clustering of non-migrant households in younger age-bands and migrant households in older ones, can be seen in Table 4.10 and the difference in age is again statistically significant.
Table 4.10 Relative age of migrant and non-migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household age (years)</th>
<th>Migrant households (%)</th>
<th>Non-migrant households (%)</th>
<th>All households (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31+</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=34  n=139  n=175

$\chi^2 = 39.635$ with 3 degrees of freedom

H0: The ages of migrant and non-migrant households are significantly different

Migrant households, then, are considerably older than non-migrant households and have thus reached a more advanced stage of the household life-cycle. Greater age might normally be associated with larger household size in terms of the number of household members. This did not seem to be the case here: migrant and non-migrant households had a similar number of people (on average 6.0 for the former, 5.5 for the latter, a statistically insignificant difference according to the t-test). The fact that both types of households had similar numbers of people contradicts research which suggests that migrant households tend to be those with the largest number of people (e.g. Selby and Murphy, 1980, 1982).

It has also been claimed that migrant households are those with the greatest number of dependants (Massey et al., 1987). Again, this claim conflicted with the study sample. Migrant households had an average of 2.5 dependants per earner, while the average for non-migrant households was 3.0. The mean number of people with paid work outside the home was also higher in migrant households, at 2.1, compared with 1.7 for non-migrant households. These data support the idea that in fact migrant households are more likely to be those with fewer dependants because they are more able to free household members (Escobar et al., 1987; Harbison, 1981; Root and De Jong, 1986, cited in Boyd, 1989).

A majority of non-migrant households claimed to have no sources of income other than that derived from the paid employment of its members\(^\text{18}\). In contrast, over 40 per cent

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\(^{18}\) Income from the sale of goods from or services performed in the household may be under-measured, since it is frequently women who engage in this type of activity and while they do generate income for the household budget in this manner, they and other members of the household often do not see it as work and may overlook it when questioned about sources of income (Aguiar, 1985).
of migrant households were said to have income from other sources. The implication is that migrant households were not the poorest or the most economically vulnerable, since as well as having on average more income-earners and a lower dependency ratio than non-migrant households, they also tended to have a more varied range of income sources. This of course does not mean that migrants do not migrate for economic reasons.

Twenty two per cent of current migrant households were receiving remittances from migrants in the US, as can be seen in Table 4.11. In other words, only two per cent of all households in my survey were receiving remittances. This may appear to be a surprisingly low figure given the findings of other research. Longitudinal surveys conducted in Guadalajara in 1982, 1985 and 1987, for example, found that around a quarter of all households in each survey were receiving remittances from migrants in the US (González de la Rocha, 1993). These studies however were carried out during Mexico’s economic crisis, which may have prompted migrant household members or relatives who did not normally send money to begin to do so to ‘help out’. This would be consistent with the finding of my research (discussed in more detail in Chapter Five) that many migrants do not remit regularly but could be expected to do so in the event of an emergency or crisis.

Table 4.11 Sources of income other than paid employment in current migrant and non-migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current migrant households (%)</th>
<th>Non-migrant households (%)</th>
<th>All households (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No other income</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant remittances</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of goods or services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=18 n=140 n=174

Current migrant and non-migrant households could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

The mean number of years spent by non-migrant households in Guadalajara was 12, while for migrant households it was 20. The t-test proves this difference is statistically
significant. Table 4.12 shows how migrant households were concentrated more in the cohorts representing longer periods of time spent in Guadalajara and the difference between migrant and non-migrant households in this respect is seen to be significant.

Table 4.12 Number of years spent by migrant and non-migrant households in Guadalajara

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Migrant households (%)</th>
<th>Non-migrant households (%)</th>
<th>All households (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31+</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 29.709 \text{ with 3 degrees of freedom} \]

**H:** There is a significant difference between migrant and non-migrant households in terms of the length of time spent in Guadalajara.

The longer time spent in Guadalajara by migrant households corresponds to their greater age, but for both groups, the average length of time spent in Guadalajara by the households is less than the average age of the households. This is suggestive of some internal migration of households after their formation from locations outside Guadalajara into the city. It should be noted here that a majority of both migrant (64 per cent) and non-migrant (84 per cent) households had no residence other than Guadalajara. This does not necessarily mean that all the members of those households with no previous residence outside the city were originally from Guadalajara, but rather that such households as a whole, from the time of their formation, have been resident in Guadalajara.

It may be expected that previous household residence is more likely to be rural than urban, so that the internal migration observed is of a ‘typical’ rural-urban nature. Table 4.13 shows the previous place of residence of those households which had been located outside Guadalajara since their formation. While a greater percentage of such households which were also migrant households had a rural background, the difference between migrant and non-migrant households was not statistically significant. In other words, possible exposure to an institutionalised tradition of migration from rural areas cannot be invoked as an explanation for subsequent migration from the urban context of Guadalajara. Households
that had members who migrated to the US were not significantly more likely to have a rural background than those that had no migrants.

Table 4.13 Previous place of residence of migrant and non-migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous residence</th>
<th>Migrant households (%)</th>
<th>Non-migrant households (%)</th>
<th>All households (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 1.697 with 1 degree of freedom

H₀: There is no significant difference between the previous place of residence of migrant and non-migrant households

The major difference that I have identified between migrant and non-migrant households is their age; migrant households are considerably older than non-migrant households. The migrant status of households is thus potentially fluid, since as non-migrant households age they may become migrant households. The simplest effect of the greater age of migrant households is that their members, particularly household heads and other members who have formed part of the household from the time of its formation, have had more time to engage in migration. Another possibility is that the heads of older households will tend to have more children, so that migration of the generation succeeding that of the household heads themselves may also now be occurring. The heads of migrant households were in fact found to have a higher number of children, on average, than the heads of non-migrant households: 5.8 compared with 3.9 respectively. This difference is statistically significant according to the t-test.

Another difference that emerged between the two groups of households is that the income base of migrant households is more varied and there are generally fewer dependants and more workers in these households. This is at least in part a function of the greater age of migrant households, which makes it likely that there are more members old enough to generate money for the household budget. Migrant households had an average of 2.1 members aged 15 and under, compared with a mean figure of 2.4 for non-migrant households. This difference is not however statistically significant according to the t-test.

In contrast, migrant households had on average four members of ‘working age’, *i.e.*
between 16 and 60, compared with three for non-migrant households, although again, this difference was not statistically significant according to the t-test.

The similarity of the two types of household with regard to other variables suggests that migrant households do not possess a fixed set of characteristics which distinguishes them from other households. Migration occurs from all types of households and hence there is not ‘a’ migrant household which can be identified and defined. This implies that it is not the innate properties of households which influence their likelihood of being migrant or non-migrant households, but factors which change through time and with progression through phases of the household life-cycle.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the setting for those which follow. In it I have given a macro-level historical and contemporary context of the migration flow from Mexico to the US. I have contextualised the research project by giving a background outline of both the city and the individual study communities. I have presented general statistical data about the household heads in the random sample to build up an impression of the people living in the study areas. I have also demonstrated, again with reference to statistical information collected in the random household survey, that many of the households in the sample had an important direct engagement with the migration process. I have outlined the parameters of this engagement and the pattern of return migration identified at the macro-level was seen to exist in the data collected in the study communities.

I have delineated the basic characteristics of the households in the random sample through a comparison of migrant and non-migrant households. This comparison revealed that the major difference between the two groups was in terms of age, with other identifiable variations reflecting this major source of difference. This suggests that migrant households do not have specific attributes which can be invoked as explanations of the migration which was observed to occur. A further implication is that variables at the household level alone are insufficient to explain the occurrence of migration, hence there is a need to include analytically the level of individual household members and their interactions. This analytical combination of the individual and the household is one of the aims of the
gendered household approach. I present a more detailed analysis of the migration process, households and their members, and gender in the following chapters.
Chapter Five: Deconstructing migrant households

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I look at the migration process in the context of the household in the sending communities. As already discussed, the household is located at the juncture of macro- and micro-scale frameworks for analysis. I have characterised it as the most appropriate unit with which to examine both the decision-making process which leads to migration, and the impacts of this migration. This conceptual focus on the household was reflected methodologically in a household-based survey which collected data not just on household heads - or as is customary, a household head, almost inevitably male (Harding, 1987; McDowell, 1992) - but on all individual members and on the household as a whole.

Yet despite the conceptual utility of the household as a research unit, it cannot be viewed as an undifferentiated whole, or as separate from wider society. Although the household is the locus of negotiation and conflict along the lines of gender and generation, the neglect of these areas is not addressed merely by using ‘the household’ as a research tool. This is the feminist critique of the household approach in general, which I apply here to the conceptualisation of migration as a household strategy in particular. I also question in this chapter the idea of consensus and unified interest within the household with regard to the impacts which migration, once initiated, may have on the household.

The major theme of this chapter is that of differentiation both within and between households. In terms of the differentiation which occurs within households, the emphasis here is on that which occurs along the lines of gender and generation. There is no simple relationship between gender, generation and migration, but I explore the various ways in which this relationship can be configured. I argue that the household does provide a focus for the structuring of the interactions between these three factors, but that these interactions cannot be understood in terms of a ‘household strategy’ - the household needs to be deconstructed so as to make visible its individual members. The differentiation between households can be evaluated with reference to easily observable attributes such as household structure, but is also related to the less tangible factors of belief-systems and ideologies.
The structure of the chapter is as follows. In the first section I examine the migration decision-making process and argue that so-called strategies are often of an individual rather than a household nature, although they are tied up with the internal relations and power structures of the household. In the following section I look at the impacts of migration in terms of the receipt (or not) of remittances, the allocation of such remittances through household mechanisms of resource distribution, and other, non-economic effects. In the final section I critically examine the notion of ‘the’ household in migration, pointing to the existence of several different household types, and to the variations in the beliefs and value-systems held by the members of these households.

5.2 The household decision-making process in migration

Migration from low-income areas of Mexico to the US is often characterised in the literature as a household survival strategy used to overcome chronic poverty (Brambila, 1985; Dinerman, 1978, 1982; Massey et al., 1987; Selby and Murphy, 1980; Wood, 1981, 1982), or as a household coping mechanism to offset acute poverty such as that experienced during a national economic crisis (Escobar et al., 1987; González de la Rocha, 1991, 1993). Alternatively, migration is depicted as a household strategy used to maximise household earning potential through the rational deployment of specific household members in the US labour market, as a substitute for, or complement to, those working in Mexico (Delechat, 1993; Malina, 1980). In this case, who migrates is determined by the demands of the US labour market and prospective migrants’ ability to fulfil them, but also by the household division of labour, which means that some members may be more easily released than others, and by the prevailing ideology of the household, which may constrain the mobility of some members more than others (cf. Chant, 1992a, 1992b; Chant and Radcliffe, 1992; Harbison, 1981; Pryer, 1992; Radcliffe, 1992). Moreover, the demands of the Mexican labour market at the time of the potential migration, and the financial return which this labour receives, relative to that obtainable in the US, are also influential in the migration decision (Arroyo, 1993).

The term ‘household strategy’ has two implications which may be contested. The first, which I will take up in the following section, is that it is the household as a whole which gains from the instrumentation of the strategy. This involves notions of the ‘collective
good’, which in fact may reflect particular interests that are not necessarily those of all household members (Wolf, 1990). The second is that a conscious decision has been taken by ‘the household’, or by its individual members acting collectively in the pursuit of common interests. Undeniably, household members do have some common interests (Jelin, 1991b). As I discussed in Chapter Two however, viewing the household as a monolithic unit ignores the individual interests and concerns of its constituent members. It also neglects power structures, both within the household and in society as a whole, which give some household members a greater capacity to act in their own interests and more authority over the actions of others (e.g. Thorne, 1982; Tilly and Scott, 1978). In this section I attempt to portray some of the influences on the household decision-making process, concentrating on gender and generation, and in doing so, demonstrate that the concept of a household strategy is too simplistic to encompass the complexity involved.

In much of the migration literature, men are seen as migrants and women as non-migrants (Buijs, 1993; Harbison, 1981; Melville, 1978; Pedraza, 1991; Recchini de Lattes, 1988). Reflecting this outlook, many studies have depicted Mexican migration as a common household strategy which relies on the seasonal migration of men to work in the US whilst their wives and children remain in Mexico (e.g. Baca and Bryan, 1985; Cárdenas, nd; López, 1986). Patriarchal gender relations embedded in normative practices are claimed to allow men and deny women the authority and resources to migrate independently. Men are traditionally expected to be financial providers, and one way of achieving this is through labour migration. Married women must accept their husbands’s migration decision, remain chaste, and stay behind to care for the children and carry out the daily activities of the domestic sphere (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). This ‘typical’ pattern of independent male migration was indeed found within the study communities: 72 per cent of male migrants who were married at the time of their migration went to the US alone, at least initially. There was also a widespread perception that this situation was the norm, echoing the traditional view of male and female roles as breadwinner and wife/mother respectively.
More men go [to the US], in fact the majority are men and the women stay here. The men go to earn money, the women stay to look after the house and the family.

(Francisco, a 73 year old gardener with seven children. He lived in Los Angeles for a year 25 years ago, working in agriculture and carpentry. One of his sons is in California, and he has a brother living in Los Angeles.)

In the ‘classic’ patriarchal Mexican family, the male household head is the ultimate source of authority (Bridges, 1980; Cubitt, 1988; Díaz-Guerrero, 1990; LeVine, 1993), and this male dominance can be reflected in the migration decision.

When he [respondent’s husband] first decided to go, and told me about it, I didn’t want him to go but I thought he knew best.

(Rosita, a 34 year old mother of three, who works in a café. Her husband lived in Los Angeles and worked in agriculture in California for three years.)

Where the male household head’s decision is paramount, he is able to control female movement as well as to make his own migration decisions independently. José is a recurrent migrant whose wife indicated that she would have liked to have gone to the US to see it for herself, but complained that José never took her. He explained that:

I like going there to work but not to live. I’ve seen cases of families who go together and the wife and the children end up not wanting to come back to Mexico, and I wouldn’t want my children growing up there.

(José, 40 year-old father of three, who runs his own key-cutting business, and also does small electrical repair jobs. He has migrated to California several times, the last time two years ago and has always worked in seasonal agricultural jobs while in the US.)

Thus José unilaterally made the decision that his wife and family should not accompany him on his migrations, despite his wife’s wish to visit the US. She, in turn, although not happy with his decision, accepted it, deferring to his position as the male head of household. At the same time, it is interesting to note that José’s decision was conditioned by apprehensions about the possibility of losing his influence in the household if the family migrated to the US together. He was not prepared to take the chance that exposure to US life-styles would erode the current structures of power in his household, and so used his privileged place in the hierarchy of decision-making to prevent the migration of other household members and therefore foreclose the possibility of any such change. In other words, while at the moment José lays claim to absolute authority in his family, he recognises its potential fluidity in the face of external change. This indicates that
patriarchal power is not a fixed and unnegotiable given, but something which is contingent on both place and circumstance and recognised as such by those involved.

The two experiences outlined above are in line with the conventional portrayal of an active male migrant with a relatively passive, accepting wife who stays or migrates according to his wishes, but in other cases reality did not correspond to the stereotype. Even where the household patterns of authority were such that women were deprived of any real role in the migration decision, this did not mean that male domination was uncontested.

I didn’t want him to go. I preferred living in my pueblo. I didn’t want to move to Guadalajara. I had lots of arguments with my husband about this, but he won out - he wanted me to live with his mother while he went to the US.

(Alicia, a 27 year old housewife and mother of three, whose husband has migrated to the US several times.)

Although Alicia did eventually comply with her husband’s demands, she made her resistance known. It seems that the meek wife who goes along with her husband’s wishes unquestioningly is less common today (if indeed she ever were prevalent), and the more assertive woman who demands more say in the decision-making process, or who at least voices her opinion, is becoming more usual (or at least more often recognised). As a result of this, women may be seen to have an active role in both encouraging and resisting migration (Chaney, 1982).

He [respondent’s husband] sometimes suggests going back to work there, but I have always been against it. If he goes, we all go, because we can’t split up the family. And I don’t want to go.

(Marisol, a 45 year old mother of five.)

Here, the tradition of male dominance is breached in order to maintain another cultural ideal - that of the close and united family. The importance of keeping the family together was emphasised by several people. Marisol’s husband apparently accepts that he does not have sole authority over his family, implying that the belief in family togetherness takes precedence over the ideology of male dominance. In this case however, the household heads’ belief in respecting the opinions and wishes of all household members has resulted in their household being divided through the migration of one of their daughters, who has recently married an American and moved to Michigan to live with her husband. Although Marisol says that she and her husband eventually gave their permission, this was

1 Small village.
immaterial to their daughter's decision. What it did achieve was the maintenance of a semblance of family unity and agreement, and the granting of their blessing to their daughter's actions.

We're a very close family, and it's a terrible loss for one of us to leave. At first we tried to persuade her not to go, but then she said she was going anyway, and so we decided that it was better just to accept it and give her our permission for the wedding and everything.

(Marisol)

I will discuss the issue of the decline in parental authority later in this section. In some instances, the situation of male dominance is completely obverted, such that it is the woman who takes control. Juana was keen to migrate, and persuaded her husband to do so too, despite his reluctance. When he refused to accompany her a second time, she migrated alone, reversing the pattern of the male migrant with the stay-at-home wife, even though she was subject to a certain degree of public censure for abandoning the traditional female role of caring for her husband.

It was my idea to go ... my husband wasn't keen on going, but he went. He wouldn't go the second time though, and he kept asking me to come back, because he was living alone ... Eventually he got used to it but people kept telling me I shouldn't leave him alone.

(Juana, a 64 year-old mother of five. She currently has a daughter living in Los Angeles and working as a domestic. She and her husband, with one son and one daughter, spent a year in Houston in 1979-1980. Juana worked as a live-in domestic, her husband was the gardener. Then in 1984 she and her daughter spent a year in California, looking after her niece's children.)

Women may be influential in determining not just their own migration or that of their household as a unit, but also the independent migration of their husband, in the same way that men have been seen to influence the migration (or not) of women.

It was my idea for him [respondent's husband] to go. He'd just lost his job and couldn't get another. He didn't really want to go ... but I insisted. I've always been much more ambitious, and I've always made the decisions.

(Lupita, a 42 year-old mother of six. She owns and works in a restaurant, and both she and her family have lived in Chicago. Three sons and one daughter are still there, and another daughter is planning to return to the US.)

It can be seen from the examples above that the migration decision spans a continuum which moves from male dominance to female dominance, with more egalitarian structures of migration decision-making lying somewhere in between these two extremes. In terms
of the evaluation of migration as a household strategy, it can be observed that at times migration is the result of an individual decision rather than a collaborative discussion. In other cases, the final decision about whether or not to migrate is taken collectively, or at least with some consideration of the concerns and interests of the various household members.

I would also suggest here that the range of migration decision-making structures which exists reflects the varied patterns that can be identified in household decision-making in general. There are signs that a ‘non-traditional’, more consensual form of household decision-making is beginning to emerge, especially among the younger generation (Benería and Roldan, 1987; Hansen, 1988). This is juxtaposed with more ‘traditional’ male-dominated patterns of authority in other households, creating a variegated texture of household decision-making across urban Mexican society as a whole. In other words, the households strictly divided by gender and generation, such as those described by Oscar Lewis (1959, 1961), have been joined by others in which such structures have been subject to questioning, negotiation and change. It has been claimed that this is in large part due to a resocialisation of women through education, such that they are more self-confident and less willing to accept male dominated structures (LeVine, 1993). The changes discussed in the literature could also be observed in the study communities.

Now machismo is lessening a bit, and more decisions are taken between the couple. Before, it was always the man, the woman had no say, he decided and that was it. When we got married, things were already a bit more flexible, but for my parents it was very different.

(Julia, a 47 year-old married woman with four sons and a daughter in the US. She works in a school canteen and attends night school to improve on her three years of education.)

Even where women were themselves part of a household which denied them power on the basis of their gender, some felt that men should not make all the decisions and saw more consultative relationships between women and men as generally more equitable and desirable.

My husband makes the decisions, but I think everyone should have a right to express their own opinions. Often men don’t understand that women have the same rights.

(Maribel, 35 year-old mother of four, who works in a supermarket.)

The way in which migration decisions were taken seemed to reflect the general system of decision-making which prevailed in the household. In Renata’s case for example, the
household was characterised by a quasi-traditional power structure in which her husband took responsibility for many decisions, but where these related to the home itself or to the family, traditionally the ‘woman’s sphere’, he usually took her opinion into account. Renata’s children were expected to comply with the wishes of the household heads. This was the case when her son decided he wanted to migrate to the US.

He [her husband] decides most things, but if it’s something to do with the house, or if it concerns the family, we discuss it between us. That’s what happened when our son said he wanted to go to the US. We talked about it and decided he could go because there are more opportunities to progress there.

(Renata, a 44 year old mother of seven, with one son who has been living in California for four years.)

Although this was by no means the case in all households in the study communities, as can be seen from some of the examples given above, the ‘ideal’ (and stereotypical) Mexican household is organised on the principle of patriarchy and a rigid division of gender roles. The ‘ideal’ household is also structured along generational lines (LeVine, 1993; Lewis, 1959, 1961; Selby et al., 1990). This would imply that few children of household heads would be able to migrate alone if their migration could not be interpreted as part of a wider household strategy devised by the household heads, or more probably from this perspective, by the male household head. As can be seen from Table 5.1 below, 58 per cent of migrants identified in migrant households in the sample were the children of the respondent household heads.

Of course, these people could be migrating as part of a household survival or mobility strategy, remitting money to their parents’ household, as has been claimed for other situations (e.g. Lauby and Stark, 1988; Trager, 1984). I will argue here however that, as for the cases of the migration of household heads discussed above, characterisation of the migration of the children of household heads as part of a household strategy obscures the personal interests of household members. These interests may conflict with those of other members and may be pursued as part of an individual rather than a household strategy. Household strategy theorists ignore the possibility of the pursuit of individual strategies, sometimes because they assume that household members choose to act for ‘the common good’, suppressing their own interests where necessary, sometimes because they assume that the household is dominated by one or more members who override the wishes of others. A further implicit assumption of this model is that the subordinate household
members comply with this domination. I want to suggest that the independent migration of the daughters and sons of household heads represents an individual strategy and thus contradicts the household strategy model.

Table 5.1. Position of migrants in migrant households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of migrants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child of household heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=78

Many parents did still believe in reinforcing the generational hierarchy through control of their children, demanding the acquiescence of their children to their own wishes. At times this operated to prevent migration, both of sons and daughters.

My oldest son wanted to go, but we [respondent and husband] wouldn’t let him because of the possibility of his getting into bad ways over there. Imagine what he could get up to on his own, with a bit of money in his pocket! He said he wanted to work there, and learn English for free. When we wouldn’t let him go, he said that we were too old, and that we didn’t understand young people, but he didn’t push it.

(María José, 38 year-old mother of four.)

There seemed to be an expectation in such cases that the children would allow themselves to be subjugated to their parents’ authority, which suggests that the structure of control premised on age was well established. It is on the whole daughters who are expected to be the most submissive to parental demands (Benería, 1991; LeVine, 1993). Although this is sometimes couched in terms of a concern for the physical safety of daughters and an insistence on the greater marketability of men’s labour, there also appears to be a higher expectation of daughters’ staying close to and caring for their parents, and conforming to conventional norms of acceptable behaviour, than there is for sons. Women are traditionally expected to be subject to male authority at all times, be it that of their father, or, when married, of their husband.
One of my daughters wanted to go to the US to live with my sister, but I said no. I don't know if it's out of egoism or what, but a father is responsible for protecting his daughters. If she was married it would be different, it's their life, but she definitely wouldn't be allowed to go alone. (Juan, 43 year old father of four, who works as a salesman. His father lived in Los Angeles for 27 years, and died there. His sister and his uncle still live there.)

Here, the father is seen to be unwilling to relinquish his parental authority over his daughter unless she is married. He will not allow her to have independence, but is prepared to transfer his authority to her husband when she marries. Similar situations have been noted in other research, for instance that of Rayna Rapp (1991:203), who comments that 'it is a common experience for a woman to go from being someone's child to having someone's child in under a year. This is not exactly a situation that leads to autonomy'. Generational authority can thus be gendered, with daughters doubly subordinate as a result of both their position in the household and their sex. A counterpoint to this however is the strong Mexican mother-son bond (Diáz-Guerrero, 1990; Leñero, 1990), which can mean that a large degree of filial loyalty is expected from sons as well as daughters. Migration can thus be interpreted as shirking these obligations and abandoning important cultural traditions.

I think migration can cause a change of attitude for the worse. My brother is supporting an American woman and her children by another man, and neglecting his responsibilities to his parents here. (Alicia, see page 124)

On the other hand, it may be that in many cases the migration of a son is not seen as transgressing the bounds of loyalty in the same way as would the migration of a daughter. This could be because, while migration to the US spatially separates a son from his parents (and most importantly his mother), the migration of a daughter not only imposes geographical distance but also carries hints of being something which is not quite 'respectable' for women. This is because it is an activity which does not have the same long tradition for women as for men, but also because of the common impressions of the US as a place somehow unsuited to 'decent' Mexican women.
The women practically as a matter of course son muy libres\(^2\) ... They get dressed up and go out with their friends to bars. The husband gets home from work and they want to go out to eat. Here families eat at home, the women take the children to school, go to the markets and the shops, and that’s it ... I prefer the Mexican customs, they’re much better, I wouldn’t want my daughters to grow up with North American habits.

*(Fernando, a 34 year-old father of five who works as a foreman in construction. He has been to California many times, the last time the year before the interview. He has had several jobs, but on his most recent migrations he has worked as a machine operator for the same firm.)*

By way of contrast, in some cases children are becoming more independent, and far from making their decisions as part of a household strategy, they are acting autonomously even if their behaviour goes against the wishes of their parents (cf. Wolf, 1990). This is the parallel to the increasing assertiveness of some Mexican women towards their partners discussed above. At the same time, some parents are beginning to concede the right of their children to decide for themselves, and to act out of self-interest rather than out of a sense of obligation or tradition. A more egalitarian relationship may thus be said to have come about between parents and children (LeVine, 1993). This was reflected in the study areas in a willingness on the part of some parents to accept their children’s plans even if they ran counter to their own.

Children make their own decisions these days, so if they [respondent’s children] wanted to go to the US to improve themselves we [respondent and husband] wouldn’t have much choice ... I would respect their decision, even if I didn’t like it.

*(Patricia, 33 year old mother of four, with a cousin in Texas.)*

The right of self-determination was being granted to both sons and daughters.

My oldest son wants to go to live with one of his uncles. I don’t want him to go but I won’t stop him.

*(Dolores, a 43 year-old widow with seven children. She has no formal employment, but sells sweets and snacks from outside her house. She has six brothers and sisters in California.)*

I’d let my daughters go if they wanted to experiment, and I would support them, because it’s one idea my husband and I have always had, always to support them and help them. One of them [her daughters] already wants to go with her uncle, so I think she’ll probably go soon.

*(Manuela, a 39 year-old woman who works as a teacher and has three children. She has two brothers in California.)*

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2 Literally, ‘they’re very free’, implying that they are independent and free to behave as they wish.
These quotes give no indication that the children of household heads are migrating at the instigation of their parents as part of a deliberately planned strategy - quite the opposite; it is the children who decide to migrate, and the parents who are having to accept their decision. As Diane Wolf (1990) has also noted in relation to the factory employment of daughters in Asia, parents sometimes appear to react and adapt to their children’s decisions rather than direct or orchestrate them. This runs counter to what we have often been led to expect from families in the ‘developing world’. Neither is there any evidence to support the idea that adult children of household heads are migrating of their own volition to extend the income-generating remit of their household. Indeed, as will be seen in the following section, regular remittances from migrant children to parents are uncommon. It should be remembered however, that the independent behaviour of adult children is by no means universal; as previous examples indicate, in some households, the degree of parental control, particularly over daughters, remains undiminished. Whatever the specific situation, sons or daughters’ decisions over whether or not to migrate can hardly be construed as part of a household strategy when major differences of opinion can be observed within households.

Thus far, gender and generation have been depicted as two largely unconnected structures of differentiation. There are however important links between them. I have already alluded to this in suggesting that daughters may be more subject to parental authority than sons. From the cases mentioned, it is clear that both ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ structures of authority were operating in tandem in the study communities. It may be that where ‘traditional’ gender relations and divisions of labour are adhered to, parental control over children, but particularly over daughters since sons have generally always been allowed more autonomy, is more likely to be maintained. On the other hand where ‘non-traditional’ gender roles are adopted between household heads, generational authority, again especially that over daughters, may be weakened.

For example, Alicia, as stated above, reluctantly moved to Guadalajara on the orders of her husband, while he migrated to the US. She is adamant that her children will not be allowed to migrate.
If my children wanted to go to the US when they were older, I wouldn’t let them because I wouldn’t want them to be so far away and me be left alone without them visiting me. I don’t want to be like my poor mother - she has half her children living away from her.

(Alicia, see page 124)

Herself subject to domination along gender lines by her husband, Alicia is determined to hold on to the generational authority she possesses over her children. This may be because, denied influence in her marital relationship, she needs to feel that she has some influence in her family, but also because of her emotional desire for companionship. It has been observed elsewhere that because a Mexican wife often expects or even anticipates her husband’s emotional desertion, she binds her children more closely to her (Romanucci-Ross, 1973, cited in LeVine, 1993). A sense of companionship is lacking in Alicia’s marriage, not just because her husband is a recurrent migrant who is frequently absent, but also because of the subordinate relation she has to him when he is present. Alicia has seen her mother derive comfort from her children, and then be deprived of it when they moved away from her, and does not want to go through this same experience herself - she is keen to keep her children close to her, both geographically and emotionally.

In contrast, Lupita, who was seen above to be the initiator of her husband’s migration and in charge of most of the major household decisions, does not have the same control over her children.

My biggest problem at the moment is my youngest daughter. She wants to go back [to the US], but she wants to be independent and doesn’t want to live with her brothers and sisters. I can’t accept her decision to go but I know I’ll have to. I don’t like the fact that my daughter is only 18 but I can’t tell her what to do.

(Lupita, see page 125)

There are also several things in the lives of her other children of which she disapproves, for example one son’s divorce and the neglect of his child, but which she feels powerless to change. This sense of helplessness frustrates Lupita, and is heightened by the contrast with her capability and autonomy in other areas of her life. Lupita has socialised her children to be independent-minded, but in a sense this has now ‘backfired’ on her, as she misses the maternal power which more traditional Mexican mothers may command.

From these two examples it would seem that where the delineation of authority along the lines of gender is reduced, the potential for re-structuring control by generation exists too.
Where gender continues to shape decision-making patterns, generational difference may remain more relevant. Several respondents implicitly recognised this connection, and effectively ‘traded off’ between the two in order to maintain the axis of power which they deemed most important. To expand, if the loyalty and obedience of children is highly valued, it may be seen as worth preserving female to male deference so as also to retain generational control.

Fathers make the decisions in Mexican families. This is the custom, and there has to be someone who makes the decisions. If the couple make decisions between them, the children don’t know who is the boss or who to turn to.

(Clara, 33 year-old mother of three.)

Conversely, if a woman has strong feelings about her own rights within the household, and is able to negotiate them with her partner, she may perceive this as being more important than having strict domination over her children. This is the situation which Lupita is in, for instance. It is interesting to note that it may be interpreted as the woman’s partner who ‘loses out’ as a result of this arrangement. In a household with relatively egalitarian relations between household members, the male head of household does not dominate his partner, nor can he command the same respect and disciplined compliance from his children as in a more patriarchal household. Yet the men in the study communities who lived in such households seemed not to perceive themselves as ‘hard done by’, which implies that more egalitarian power structures are not beneficial solely to women and children.

Men make decisions, they usually have that responsibility. But in our house we discuss things between us, and if the children are involved they can contribute as well, everyone is involved.

(Pedro, a 46 year-old father of five, works as a buyer for an aerosol company. He worked in a clothes factory in California many years ago, and has some in-laws there now.)

The link between gender-based and generational power may not however be so clear-cut. To elaborate, even where the importance of gender in defining the power relationship between spouses is eroded, the influence of gender may or may not continue in the generational sense. Thus relatively egalitarian or ‘non-traditional’ relations may exist between household heads, but relations between the generations within the household may be either ‘non-traditional’ or ‘traditional’. This is evident in the willingness of some parents to allow their children, both sons and daughters, to make their own migration
decisions, at the same time as others continue to restrict their daughters' behaviour but permit their sons more flexibility.

This latter situation has been commented upon elsewhere as one that causes friction: 'that fathers are so suspicious of and punitive towards their daughters and yet do nothing to restrict their sons is a major source of complaint' (LeVine, 1993:64). The greater autonomy which has 'traditionally' been granted to men is clearly evident in the migration situation. The literature depicts a male-dominated migration tradition, often passed from father to son, in rural communities characterised by a rigidly gendered division of activities (e.g. Massey, 1987c; Reichert and Massey, 1979). The different perceptions of male and female mobility could also be observed in the urban study communities.

I wouldn't let my daughters go to live there alone, but I would let my sons. Well, it's different for men, and they have lots more opportunities to get ahead.
(Paulina, a 38 year-old mother of nine, with a sister-in-law in Los Angeles.)

Parental control over daughters may not be explicitly imposed; rather, it may be part of the value system which parents pass on to their children, so that acting counter to it can be construed as immoral and also in a sense disobedient.

My daughter has studied English and she has some American friends, but I know that she wouldn't want to go to the US alone because I've brought her up to respect her parents and our customs. She's old enough to make her own decisions, but she has a lot of respect for the family and the house; we live very unidos.
(Pati, a 48 year-old mother of ten. She works in her own restaurant and has three sons living in Los Angeles.)

Pati's situation illustrates the double standards, already referred to above, which are often applied to sons and daughters, and the contradictions which can exist between the axes of gender and generation. Pati has three migrant sons, and although she misses them, she does not think less of them as a result of their migration, yet she does prize her daughter's restraint from following her brothers to the US. This again hints at the almost scandalous associations which the unaccompanied migration of a young woman may evoke, in contrast to the resourcefulness and courage it is often seen as demonstrating when young men migrate. This underlines the social construction of migration as a gendered process.

3 Close, united.
At the same time Pati subscribed to the idea of equal decision-making power for women in marriage and talked explicitly about the advantages of this for both men and women which was mentioned above.

It depends a lot on the customs a family follows, but traditionally it's the man who makes the decisions. Now this is changing, and they [men] are starting to recognise that others have opinions and more couples make decisions between the two of them now. This is good for both men and women, for women obviously because they have more say in what goes on, for men because it relieves them of some of the responsibility of making decisions for the family.

(Pati)

This case represents a variation on the transference of male authority over women from father to husband. Here, Pati is suggesting that both the father and the mother should have influence over their daughters, but that once these young women marry, they should be able to have an egalitarian relationship with their husband. Gender subordination may thus be reinforced when it is combined with generational difference. In other words, although Pati subscribes to the idea of 'non-traditional' relations between spouses, she does not believe in 'non-traditional' relations between parents and children.

There is therefore a complex and unpredictable relationship between gender and generation, although it seems that within households, it is daughters, traditionally disadvantaged by both variables, who are in potentially the most subordinate position. It would appear that, in general, where 'traditional' forms of gender relations exist between spouses, the relations which are in place between the spouses and their children also tend to be 'traditional'. ‘Non-traditional’ relations did not seem to exist between parents and children where relations between the parents remained ‘traditional’. This does not of course mean that these children did not go on to forge ‘non-traditional’ relationships with people outside the household. In contrast, both ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ generational relations could be found where the gender relations between the parents were ‘non-traditional’. This may be indicative of a gradual process of change, in which the gender relations between spouses shift before the generational relations, reinforced by gender, between parents and daughters. Having said this, from the examples given here, it is clear that change is occurring, and some young women are seen to have higher

4 Diane Wolf (1990) also refers to parents acting together to exert control over their children (in this case, daughters in Taiwan). She also points out that this does not mean there are no potential conflicts or differences of interest between husbands and wives.
expectations of autonomy and to be exercising a considerably greater degree of independence than the previous generation (see also LeVine, 1993).

By way of a summary, it can be said that if a migration decision is based on a process of discussion, collaboration and consensus, it may well represent a household strategy. This does not however automatically follow. Debate and agreement may equally lead to, or follow on from, an individual decision to migrate which is not part of a wider household effort to overcome poverty or generate income. I have shown in this section that the children of household heads are particularly likely to migrate in pursuit of individual goals, and I will emphasise this further in the discussion of motivations for migration in Chapter Six. The concept of a ‘household strategy’ is incapable of incorporating such ‘individual strategies’ which I have suggested may play a considerable role in migration. Furthermore, while the existence of households in which negotiation takes place between members of equal standing in terms of their power and authority was observed, this was certainly not the case for all, or even a majority, of households. In the absence of a normative household decision-making process which is truly collaborative in the sense that it does not ascribe differential power to individuals on the basis of gender and generation, it seems to me misleading to describe the migration decision, or any other decision, as a ‘household strategy’.

5.3 The impacts of migration on the household

5.3.1 Remittances

The conventional conceptualisation of migration as a household strategy would imply that the migrant regularly remits money to the household throughout their absence, or brings a substantial amount of savings with them on their return (Durand, nd; Rubenstein, 1992). Yet despite the fact that 11 per cent of households in the sample had at least one member in the US at the time of the survey, only 22 per cent of these current migrant households were said to be receiving money regularly from them, although some people anticipated that the migrant(s) would bring money with them on their return.
He hasn’t sent us money - well, there are lots of problems with the banks and the post. But if he visits he says he’ll bring some with him. 

(Renata, see page 127)

Renata’s son did not go to the US with the intention of sending money back to his parents; in fact they have had to send money to him, and are also financially worse off because they no longer have the contribution their son used to make to the gasto.

It was a bit difficult when he first left because he had been giving to the gasto, but it wasn’t too bad, and we haven’t had to send him money, except at first, when he was looking for a house to rent and needed a deposit. 

(Renata)

This illustrates a common situation in households where the migrant is the child of the household heads. Far from being sent out into the US labour market by the household heads to increase their contribution to the household income, these migrants were leaving independently, although some continued to be dependent on their parents in Mexico for economic support in certain circumstances. Indeed, as the quote above suggests, parents may expect to be called on to provide financial assistance. This presents a contradiction to the orthodox view of inter-generational flows of wealth being in the direction of child to parent in the ‘developing world’ (cf. Caldwell, 1976) and when children migrate to more affluent countries (Finch, 1989). There is nothing to suggest that the migration of these adult children of household heads was part of a wider household strategy, although the household may be able to count on their financial aid in an emergency. Thus a tacit mutual agreement may be established, whereby both the migrant and the other members of the household can count on each other for monetary help in a crisis or unusual situation, but not on a regular basis.

They [respondent’s sons] don’t send money, but when there was an emergency and I had to go to hospital, they sent some. If it hadn’t been urgent I wouldn’t have asked. I wouldn’t send them money either unless it was really important. 

(Margarita, a 53 year-old woman, who works in the family business, a small grocery/corner shop, with two sons living in California and working as carpenters.)

Other migrant children remitted money to their parents at first, but then discontinued this practice as they became wrapped up in their own lives and financial commitments.

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5 Household budget used to purchase collective items such as food, and also sometimes for household bills.
My son used to send us money, but now he has his own responsibilities because he’s started living with a woman. (Esther, a 62 year-old woman, who takes in ironing and has a son who has lived in California for 10 years.)

This links back to the idea that migration can lead to a diminution of family responsibilities, although in the case above, no resentment on the part of the migrant’s mother is evident. This is indicative not of a break-down of a household strategy, because the migration was initiated for personal motives, and not as part of a household decision, but of a weakening over time and space of the sense of obligation felt by migrant children to their parents in Mexico. This may reflect simultaneously the growth of autonomy for adult children in Mexico, and the weaker emphasis on family ties and children’s duties to their parents in the US, an emphasis which may be adopted by migrants. The latter may be ascribed partly to cultural values and the general flow of wealth from parents to children in the ‘developed world’ (Caldwell, 1976; Finch, 1989), partly to the existence of a state welfare system which may - at least in theory - reduce the need of elderly parents to rely on their children in the ‘developed world’. Young people can thus increasingly be seen to migrate as a result of their own, independent interests, rather than those of the household. Their ability to do this is of course dependent on the balance of power within the sending household, as discussed in the previous section.

Thus far, the emphasis has been on migrant children of household heads, but the traditional model of Mexican migration sees the male breadwinner migrating to the US in search of new earning opportunities, remitting money to the stay-at-home wife who is left behind to look after the household. Although this was not the only pattern of migration to be found in the study sites, it could be observed. In some cases, the routine of migration may become so well-established as to be barely noticeable.

I didn’t have any problems. He used to send money, and the only extra thing I had to do was look after the animals. It was just about the same when he [her husband] was there as when he wasn’t. (Isabel, a 56 year-old mother of 10. She has a son and a daughter in San Francisco, and five brothers in the US, three in California, two in Chicago.)

Isabel is recalling the days when she lived in rural Jalisco and her husband was a recurrent migrant, and her quote typifies the image of the smooth-functioning migrant household as one of clearly-defined and complementary female and male roles. Isabel raised no objections to her husband’s migration, yet she was in no way party to his decision, and
although she did regularly receive money, this was not strictly at her own disposal - it was to be used in the manner stipulated by her husband, the household decision-maker (see Cárdenas, nd; Chaney, 1982). This cannot then represent a household strategy unless 'the household' is equated with the male household head.

Although the goal of male migrants who are household heads may be to earn money to remit back to Mexico, in reality things are not always as orderly or as predictable as in the case cited above.

Men go alone, and some save money and come back with it to their families, but others don’t send money, they go off with other women and they stay there, abandoning their families here.

(Pati, see page 134)

Male migrants are not always entirely reliable in remitting money, so that instead of household finances improving, women may be more economically constrained, and may have to rely on the help of relatives.

He sent money when he wasn’t drinking it. I went with the children to live with my parents.

(Liliana, a 42 year-old mother of five, who does sewing jobs from the house. Her husband has been to the US to work as an agricultural labourer several times since they married.)

This enforced dependence may increase women's feelings of frustration and helplessness: not only are they subordinate to their husband, but also to other people because of their involuntary reliance on them.

He [respondent’s husband] doesn’t always send money regularly. I hate being without money and I don’t like having to ask my parents-in-law for it.

(Alicia, see page 124)

Overall then, the migration of a household member is no guarantee of the receipt of remittances. This may be particularly applicable where the migrant is an adult child of the household heads. Even where remittances are sent, they may not arrive on a regular basis, and this may cause financial hardship and dependence for household members left behind. Women whose husbands are migrants are especially likely to be affected in this way.

Where the economic gains of migration are returned to the sending household, a household strategies approach implicitly leads us to expect their use to benefit all household members. Given the uneven division of power which has been observed to prevail in
migration decision-making however, this seems unlikely. Previous research has indicated that household members, and in particular women and men, have differential use of and access to household income (Beneria and Roldan, 1987; Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Pahl, 1991; Roldan, 1985). Returning to the new household economics scenario of the benevolent dictator, it may be that even where the benefits of migration are enjoyed by all household members, the decision about how to spend the money was taken by only one person without their consulting the others. José, for example, used the money he had earned in the US to improve his house.

I was motivated to migrate by the desire to improve the house, not because we didn’t have enough to eat. I saved a lot to improve the house ... I don’t like luxuries, I prefer the simple life, but I do like improving things ... I built the second floor.

(José, see page 123)

It is true that all the members of José’s household have gained from his migrations, but at the same time, it should be remembered that just as they were excluded from the migration decision - José’s wife wanted to go with him but he didn’t let her - they were also left out of the decision to spend the money earned through his migration on the house. While they now have more space and more facilities, they may in fact have had other priorities which were not considered. In other words, household benefit does not imply household consensus. I would thus argue that even where the outcome of a migration is ostensibly beneficial to the household as a whole, it is often misleading to characterise this migration as a household strategy, if by this we mean a plan consciously devised by all household members, because some may have had a negligible contribution to the migration decision. In addition, where apparently collective strategies are put into action, this may have been possible only because some household members were prepared to suppress or forego their own individual interests where they conflict with the wider goal. Patricia Fernández-Kelly (1983a) has suggested that it is usually women who bear the costs of collective strategies, while the gains are more widely distributed, as may be seen in the case of José’s family.

In Mexico, the ability to budget rationally and spend responsibly is often perceived as a feminine quality (Logan, 1981), reflecting women’s greater concern for family and household matters.
Women think ahead, and more clearly than men - men spend money, for instance on drink, without thinking what’s needed in the house.
(Beatriz, a 44 year-old mother.)

It may thus more frequently be women than men who are expected to manage on a reduced budget when migrant remittances fail. This has already been seen to be the case for some women with migrant husbands. Some women also avoid becoming too dependent on the financial contributions of their adult children, anticipating their departure from the household (though not necessarily because of migration to the US: marriage was the most common reason for adult children in the study sites to leave the parental household) and often using their money for ‘luxury’ purchases like clothes, or for relatively infrequent expenditure such as bills. Thus, while they make use of the money their children give them, they are not reliant on it for basic household survival. This makes it easier to cope economically with a migrant son or daughter, and also reflects the declining expectation of long-term financial contributions from children.

She [respondent’s daughter] used to give me money for the gasto, but I don’t really miss it because I used to use it for extras, or I’d put it towards expenses that only came every now and again, like the gas and electricity.
(Marisol, see page 124)

5.3.2 Non-economic impacts of migration

As illustrated by the discussion above, migration does not always bring economic gain to the sending household, and in some cases it may represent a loss. Where remittances are received, the household mechanisms of power may mean that some members have more control over their use than others. In the same way, the non-economic impacts of migration are varied, and are also differentiated within migrant households.

The independent migration of a male household head may be conjectured as removing a source of female subordination, and hence increasing the autonomy of the female household head. The necessity of taking on new responsibilities both inside and outside the household, including paid employment, may be said to increase the range of a woman’s activities, and in doing so raise her sense of self-esteem. This in turn may be translated into a claim for greater authority and recognition within the household (Ahern et al., 1985; Baca and Bryan, 1985; Chant, 1987,1992a,1992b; González de la Rocha, 1993; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Roldán, 1985). For women who have suffered from
domestic violence, male migration may also remove the threat of physical violence. On the other hand, male absence may reduce financial security, and cause economic hardship for the woman, as discussed above. If she does manage to obtain paid work, it is in a gender-segmented labour market, which may merely exchange or augment the gender exploitation to which she is subject (see Arizpe and Aranda, 1986; Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Elson and Pearson, 1981; Nash, 1985; de Oliveira, 1988).

Furthermore, male migration cannot always be invoked as an explanation of female paid employment, or of women’s participation in community and political organisations, or of their role as household managers, since many women undertake these activities even where there is no absent male migrant (see Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Craske, 1994; Lozano and Padilla, 1988; Stichter and Parpart, 1990). It is of course possible that participation in these activities increases during the male migrant’s absence. In the sample, 26 per cent of female household heads were economically active outside the household. In fact, women’s work both outside and inside the household may effectively facilitate male migration (Ahern et al., 1985; Baca and Bryan, 1985; Gabayet and Lailson, 1990).

When my husband was there [the US] he sent money, but not always regularly. But I was working.
(Rosita, see page 123)

In that the migration of the male household head creates a de facto woman-headed household, further implications can be drawn from the more general literature on such households. While paid work for women may in some senses be positive, leading to a sense of satisfaction, self-fulfilment and financial independence, it can also increase the overall burden of work if there is a continued responsibility for household work in the classic scenario of the double or even triple day (de Oliveira, 1988; Holcomb and Rothenberg, 1991; Moser, 1987; Townsend and Momsen, 1987). Alternatively, some or all of the household tasks may be shifted onto other household members. It has been argued that this sharing of domestic work is easier in extended households which include more than one adult woman (Chant, 1987). In nuclear households, the load may fall on the children, especially daughters, so that although some of the traditional constraints of gender may have been loosened for the female household head, they are perpetuated and at times exacerbated generationally for her daughters (Beneria, 1991; Moser, 1989, cited in LeVine, 1993). This lends further support to the claim made in the previous section.
that daughters of household heads may be the most disadvantaged household members even if the gender roles and relations of the household head(s) are 'non-traditional'.

The overall experience of women with absent migrant husbands may therefore not conform totally to either of the contradictory scenarios of advantage or disadvantage depicted in the literature. Furthermore, the emotional aspect of separation may be important.

I missed him [respondent's husband] when he was away, and it was very difficult in some ways. I had to look after the children alone and everything. I didn't work because my husband likes me to stay at home with the children. But I didn't have any economic problems because he always sent money, or if he didn't, I borrowed money. And if I had other problems, I had my family around me.

(Inés, a 31 year-old mother of three young children, with a brother in California. Her husband went to California very soon after they were married, and four years before the interview had gone again to work in Los Angeles.)

This example also illustrates that male dominance may continue even in the absence of the male migrant's physical presence - in this case, Inés does not work because she knows it is against her husband's wishes. Her conformity may stem from her general subordination to her husband, but also from the proximity of their families, who may act as 'checks' on her behaviour. It is clear that male absence in itself does not produce automatic female independence. One source of male domination may simply be replaced by another through a transferral of authority from the male migrant to his male relatives, who may monitor a woman's behaviour in the absence of her migrant husband (Ahern et al., 1985; Alarcón et al., 1987, Cardénas, nd). The negative aspects of this situation can be exacerbated still further if the woman lives with these relatives. The problems of living with parents-in-law in particular have been noted (Romanucci-Ross, 1973, cited in LeVine, 1993; Varley, 1993). This is the situation in which Alicia, mentioned above, found herself when her husband migrated to the US. Often dependent on her in-laws for money, she also felt her vulnerable position was exploited in terms of the amount of work she was expected to do in the household and she felt restricted in what she was able to do.
She [respondent's mother-in-law] doesn’t do anything... I do nearly all the work. I cook, I clean, I look after the children... I don’t go back to my pueblo much to see my mother, no me dejan\(^6\).

(Alicia, see page 124)

Another worry for stay-at-home wives is the fear of abandonment or infidelity on the part of the migrant husband (López, 1986).

Some end up abandoning their families, leaving their wives and families here and finding other women there. It’s a scandal.

(Gloria, a 48 year-old married woman, who is looking for work. She has a sister in California.)

Neither is it just women who are affected.

Children are affected the most if their father migrates and they are left behind. He can send money but they lose out on affection and guidance, and in the end they lose trust and closeness.

(Monica, a 28 year-old woman with one 10 year old son.)

Depending on the length and frequency of the migration(s), children of male migrants may effectively grow up without a father figure. In a cultural context which places the father at the apex of the household pyramid of authority, this can cause rowdiness and indiscipline. Some children of migrants come to resent their father for abandoning both them and their mother, or because they have always seen him only as a temporary visitor, and a source of money and gifts, come to relate to him not on a familial or emotional level but on a material one.

My father has been going backwards and forwards for about ten years. It’s not fair or logical. I lived with my grand-parents for most of the time until I got married... All us children have suffered, we missed the advice of a father. My brother is always drinking, hanging around being a layabout. My mother can’t do anything with him... She [Sylvia’s mother] did everything, she had to be a mother and a father to us. She had all the responsibilities, all the worry, all the economic problems... My father looks super-young now, and my mother looks old. I think it’s because of all the worries she’s had being in charge of the family. All he did was send money every now and again.

(Sylvia, a 26 year-old woman, married, with a young baby. Although she did not have paid work at the time of the interview, she said she would eventually like a job as a secretary. Her father has been a recurrent migrant to the US for the last 10 years, normally staying away for nine months at a time.)

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6 Literally, they don’t let me. Alicia is referring to the fact that she is mainly responsible for looking after not just her own children but also those of her brothers and sisters-in-law who live in the household and in the separate household which shares her parents-in-law’s plot of land.
This quote from Sylvia's interview conveys both the sense of emotional deprivation which she felt, expressed as a feeling of bitterness towards her absent father, and the recognition of the hardships caused to her mother by his migration. It is also indicative of the rebellion of some of the younger generation of women against traditional rigid gender stereotypes of the long-suffering wife virtually confined to the home and the domineering, heavy-drinking husband with the freedom to go where and do what he pleases.

Alternatively, a female-centred household may provide a less authoritarian and more emotion-based atmosphere within which children can develop in a more secure environment (Chalita, 1992; Chant, 1988), and without the constraints imposed from above by a patriarchal household head. Adult children still resident in the household, especially sons, may be called on to take over some of their father's roles in governing the household and in income generation. Both sons and daughters may find themselves finishing their education and entering the labour market earlier than they might otherwise have done, in order to support the household, just as they do in woman-headed households formed through causes other than male migration (Chant, 1988; González de la Rocha, 1988).

The migration of the male household head and its impacts on those left behind represents only one specific migration experience. Another instance is the migration of adult children of household heads. For the migrants themselves, migration may be an assertion of their independence (Escobar et al., 1987), and an escape from parental authority. The experience of their time in the US may be either positive or negative and is partly dependent on their gender. The gendering of the migration experience will be discussed in the following chapters. For the migrant's parents, migration can be a source of anxiety about the physical safety and social behaviour of their child.

I do worry about them. I'm scared that they'll marry gringas and want to stay there. I'm very concerned about the availability of drink and drugs there, but my sons say they don't dabble in that sort of thing. The earthquake [in Los Angeles] scared me though. (Margarita, see page 137)

The geographical separation can cause acute emotional stress, especially if the household is one bound by emotionally strong bonds. Women are often viewed as the guardians of traditional family values (Cubitt, 1988; Youssef, 1972), so that the disintegration of the family through the migration of a child may affect them more.
I was very sad when they went. I worry about them a lot. I worry more than he [her husband] does. It's always the mothers who worry, men are harder.

(Pati, see page 134)

Moreover, the mother-child bonds in the 'ideal' Mexican family are traditionally very strong (Bridges, 1980; LeVine, 1993) so that it is also more likely that women suffer most from the migrant's absence as a result of their role as mother. In their roles as both wives and mothers, Mexican women are depicted as the source of caring and emotional concern; traditional male roles governed by machismo do not admit such typically 'feminine' qualities, which are seen to be either absent or repressed (Diaz-Guerrero, 1990), so that women and men may be differentially affected by the migration of their children.

I think of my sons, el viejo only thinks of the money.

(Margarita, see page 137)

There are also some indications that this parental concern is gendered, with daughters a greater source of anxiety.

I want her to come back ... I worry a lot about her safety. I always worry more about my daughters, and I have better relationships with them - well, my sons have their own responsibilities.

(Conchita, a 65 year old-widow, whose daughter has lived in Los Angeles for the last five or six years.)

This is a generalised phenomenon, and not one which is exclusively linked to migration, but it may also be at least partly influenced by the specific worries which the perceived nature of US society induces.

I wouldn't want my daughters to go [to the US] unless they were married - it's too dangerous otherwise. I would worry less about my sons, but I can't really say why. Well, they have different attitudes over there. It's too liberal, and life is too hurried over there.

(Maria, 53 years old and widowed, who lived in Los Angeles for eight years, where she worked as a sales assistant in a jewellers'.)

Although it was comparatively infrequent, female household heads also migrated independently from the research communities, leaving the other members of their household to cope without them. Juana, who migrated alone to the US when her husband said he would not go with her, has already been mentioned. A further example is that of Esperanza, a 49 year-old mother who normally works as a self-employed saleswoman. At

7 'The old man', using a common phrase to refer to her husband. The phrase is also used to refer to wives, in the form la vieja.
the time of the survey she had been in Los Angeles for a year, visiting her daughter who had migrated there about eight years earlier. She had been doing this more or less every year since her daughter left, but normally only stayed six months. Due to the cultural reification of motherhood and the practical expectations to which this gives rise, the voluntary absence of a mother through migration may be particularly keenly felt by her children, and may be perceived as neglect.

She [Esperanza] must like it there because she’s been there nearly a year. We miss her, she was always happy and full of energy. It’s not the same without her, and we don’t go out much anymore. We need her more than my sister does, because she’s married and has children, and we [respondent and another sister] don’t even have boyfriends. But we don’t know when she’s coming back.

(Esperanza’s daughter, age 22.)

5.4 The notion of ‘the’ household in migration

In the preceding sections of this chapter I have looked at the ways in which migration decisions are formulated, and the impacts of migration experienced, within the household. It has become clear that the concept of a household strategy of migration is untenable given the differentiation which exists between members of the household. I will argue in this section that differentiation also occurs between households. The notion of ‘the’ household, implicitly a nuclear household composed of mother, father and dependent children, thus also needs to be explored. Assuming the universality of the nuclear household is an ethnocentric practice which ignores the possibility and validity of other household forms, and is in any case inapplicable even in the developed societies in which this assumption emerged (Collier et al., 1982; Harris, 1984; Netting et al., 1984; Rapp, 1991; Thorne, 1982; Varley, 1994). Household structure is moreover not the only form of variation between households; other important variables include household life-cycle stage and the prevailing ideologies of household members. The comparison of migrant and non-migrant households in the previous chapter revealed that the major difference between the two types was in terms of age; at the same time, it could be seen that amongst the households as a whole, substantial variation occurred with regard to age, household structure and so on. I will suggest in this section that there are also significant differences between migrant households.
As I demonstrated in Chapter Four, migration was found to occur from households of all types, and while migrant households were on the whole older than non-migrant households, migrants also left from younger households. Similarly, while most migrant households had been formed in Guadalajara, others had migrated internally from other urban or rural areas. Hence, while general tendencies may be identified, these do not represent the defining characteristics of every migrant household. Migrants, then, come from different types of household, and as shown above, the migration decision-making process and the impacts of migration can also take several different forms. The impact of male absence for instance, was seen to be mediated by the composition of the household, the pre-existing division of labour, the interactions with members of other households and the dominant ideological values. This illustrates how one form of absence can have different effects, not just between household members, but also between different households experiencing the same form of absence. It also emphasises the fact that there is not ‘a’ universal household which interacts in a predictable way with the migration process.

Although ideologies are the most difficult of the variables mentioned above to ascertain, they are critical in shaping migration and its effects. I have already discussed the complex connections between gender, generation and ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ ideologies. In the first two sections of this chapter, another recurrent theme has been that of perceptions of women, and women’s perceptions of themselves. For instance, an increase in Mexican women’s self-confidence and aspirations towards a right to influence in their households has been associated with education and with experience of paid employment (LeVine, 1993).

Most women work because they have to, but also it’s good to work, to get ahead, to have your own money. I used to work, I started so we could get money for a house, but my husband didn’t like it and wanted me to be at home ... But things have improved for women. Now they go to school instead of working at home in the house and are starting to get on in all areas. My daughter is one of only two or three women in the class of engineering students, but they do as well if not better than the men. Things are better now that women are seen as being for more than just washing, making tortillas and producing children.

(Renata, see page 127)

But this does not mean that women no longer face male resistance to their working outside the home.
Not many women work in Mexico, but more than before. Often men won’t let them. Their place is in the home - it’s typical machismo. It’s definitely changing among young people, which is good. My life is very different from my mother’s, for instance.

(Teresa, a 25 year old woman, married with a two year-old daughter. She works as a secretary in a secondary school, and has two sisters in Los Angeles. Her husband worked in Sacramento before they were married.)

This resistance is partly because male supremacy in the household is also based on economic power - being the breadwinner, men ‘earn’ the right to be in control.

Men make most of the family decisions, but that’s fine because they earn the money, so they should be in charge.

(Carmel, 29 year-old mother of four, who lived in California as a child. Two of her brothers, an aunt and her grand-parents were living there at the time of the interview.)

Female entry into the labour market therefore represents a challenge to male domination at home. There is also a male fear that women might earn more than they do and ‘get ahead’ (Chant, 1987). In addition, if a man’s wife works outside the home, not only does it permit her more freedom of movement and thus generate suspicion, but it may also suggest to other men that he is unable to fulfil his breadwinner role, or that he is incapable of controlling his wife (ibid.).

Lupita, whose case was cited above, has always worked. She sees herself as something of a businesswoman, and is constantly striving for something new and better. She is economically independent, and thus hers is the classic ‘success story’. On the other hand, it has also been argued that there is no simple link between a woman’s control of an independent income, the renegotiation of gender relations, and her awareness of gender subordination within the household (Benería and Roldán, 1987). In other words, earning money does not necessarily entitle women to more say in decision-making, nor does it automatically produce the desire to do so. Both men and women may still hold ‘traditional’ views about the right of a man to rule over his household, so that although in some cases a woman may contest her husband’s authority, in others she may accept it as something somehow ‘natural’ and ‘right’.

Men make decisions, and I think this is right. It’s better for them to decide, especially if it’s to do with money or with other people outside the family.

(Cristina, 39 year-old mother of three.)
This view, as well as supporting male domination, reflects the traditional notion that the worlds of men and women correspond to public and private spaces, and that they should be separated - 'men are for the streets, women are for the home' (de Barbieri, 1982, cited in Chant, 1987:287). The public world is associated with money, economic transactions and authority, the private with family and housework. Where they overlap, from this perspective men and women should take on the activities most closely allied to their 'world'. For instance, even though the household is 'women's place', when major household decisions are required, men should make them because they are associated with authority. Similarly, although shopping takes place in 'public', because of its connections with domestic tasks it is an activity mainly undertaken by women. It has been suggested that such attitudes are changing amongst the younger generations of women, who are demanding greater freedom and more equality in their marital relationships. Education may well have played a role in this shift - in 1990, 40 per cent of the female population of Mexico aged 15 and over had some post-primary education, compared with less than 10 per cent in 1970 (INEGI, 1993:73).

The behaviour of women like Juana, who migrated to the US without her husband, cannot however be accounted for by such explanations of the erosion of traditional gender roles in decision-making. Juana has little formal education, and before she went to the US, had never worked outside the home. It can be argued that the prevailing values in Mexican society are themselves changing, and that these will have an impact on everyone, regardless of their personal experience. This may be so, yet change is clearly occurring at different rates, since households whose divisions of labour and authority are structured along conventional gender lines are still common.

It has been claimed that the picture of total male dominance in Mexico has always been inaccurate (Cromwell and Ruiz, 1979). This claim is relevant here. Mexican gender relations are generally understood as patriarchal, supporting the dominance of men and the subordination of women (Díaz-Guerrero, 1990). But the Mexican family is not a monolithic entity, and this patriarchy exists in varying degrees (Hondagneu, 1990). A similar claim has been made in the context of the Peruvian working class:

within the family there are also a number of instances where men's and women's roles diverge from the dominant machista norms, not merely because of some 'deviant' circumstance such as a female-headed
household, but because the people concerned do not subscribe to the dominant ideology.
(Scott, 1990:199)

Hence, while general social transformations, for example in women's participation in paid employment or in education, may effect change in the prevailing normative system, it is important to recognise that not all households are governed by such values, either before or after any general transformations which may occur.

The migration process interacts with all of these values and ideologies. In some cases, migration occurs because of the gender division of labour and dominant ideology in a household, in others it is prevented for precisely the same reasons. The impacts of migration are also filtered through an ideological lens - there are no changes which inevitably occur when a migration of a particular form takes place. Migration can precipitate change, most pertinently here in women's activities and opinions, but it is not the only force operating on the members of a household. They are also influenced by their own beliefs, by those of other household members (either willingly or unwillingly), and by the normative practices of society.

Where there is a clash between the potential migration of a particular household member, with their own specific attributes of gender, generation and ideology, and other household members, this conflict may be resolved in several ways. Three are identified here, each encompassing different possibilities for the interaction of gender ideologies with the migration process. Firstly, the ideologies of household members may change in order to incorporate the migration as an acceptable possibility. There may be a major or minor adjustment in the beliefs which household members hold about the appropriate behaviour of particular gendered household members. This may increase the range of activities open to women, either as migrants themselves, or as stay-at-homes, for instance as new entrants to the labour market. Juana's family for instance, came to accept her independent migration despite their initial opposition and the disapproval of some of their friends. Alternatively, it may in fact reduce the autonomy of women by subjecting them to the authority of other family members, such as parents-in-law, in the absence of a dominant man. This is the situation in which Alicia found herself.
Secondly, where the migration conflicts with the wishes of some household members but not that of others, the person or people with the greatest influence in the household may impose their view on others. This may result in either the prevention or the promotion of migration. In this instance, there is little or no alteration of previous arrangements of decision-making, although those people (often women) whose wishes have been overridden may resent the domination of the household by one member. Sylvia for example feels quite bitter about her father’s recurrent migration and the negative effects she believes it had on her family, especially her mother. Interestingly, Sylvia’s mother did not seem to resent her situation to the same extent, which may be indicative of a generational change of ideologies in this case.

Thirdly, household member(s) whose opinions or wishes are ignored or subordinated may refuse to accept the ideology of the dominant person(s), and act in a manner which runs counter to it, effectively breaking away from the household power structures. This may or may not cause the remaining household members to adapt their ideological stances so as to be reconciled with the migrant, in effect reverting to the first situation. Marisol’s family did accommodate behaviour which ran counter to their beliefs: Marisol’s daughter was determined to migrate to the US and although Marisol and her husband objected strongly, they eventually decided to accept their daughter’s decision in order to preserve their relationship with her.

The three scenarios I have presented here are not necessarily mutually exclusive, nor do they represent all possible alternatives. They were however all observed in the study communities and they illustrate that both migration and ideologies are dynamic, and can interact to produce a variety of outcomes. Where the possibilities are so diverse, it makes little sense to speak of ‘the’ migrant household.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have used the gendered household approach to explore several aspects of the migration process in the sending communities. In looking at the migration decision, a range of situations was observed, from ‘traditional’ male dominance, through more egalitarian male-female relations, to female dominance. While the ‘typical’ rural Mexican
migration pattern of the male migrant with the stay-at-home wife was present in the urban study communities, so too were other forms of migration. Of particular note is the independent migration of adult children - both sons and daughters - of household heads. In these cases, a relative autonomy of the migrants in making their own decisions was evident, in contrast to the more conventional view of the Mexican household and indeed 'the third world household', as controlled by a patriarchal head. However, there were also cases of households where patriarchal structures of decision-making were maintained, illustrating the existence of both 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' forms of decision-making and authority in the study sites. The links between 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' structures of power related to gender and to generation were investigated, and were seen to be inter-connected, although not in any simple or predictable manner.

In terms of the impacts of migration on the household, there was again an obvious contrast to the orthodox perception of migration as a source of income for the sending household - relatively few households were regularly receiving migrant remittances. This had a varying impact, depending on the position of the migrant in the sending household and the expectations placed on them as income-generators. Wives of male migrants were seen to be the most vulnerable to suffering as a result of failed remittances. The migration of one or more household members also has non-economic consequences for those left behind. For women, these may be either positive or negative, or both, as emerged from the personal experiences discussed in this chapter. The point to note here is that male migration is not an automatic prompt to female liberation. The effects of the migration of adult children on their parents have also been discussed.

In this chapter I have examined the migration decision-making process and the impacts of migration according to the gendered household approach. This has involved deconstructing the household so as to reveal its individual constituent members, each defined by gender and generation, and with their own interests and belief-systems. When the migration decision-making process and the impacts of migration are examined according to this framework, it becomes clear that depicting migration as a 'household strategy' is misleading. Similarly, analysing the household as a conglomerate of individuals rather than an undifferentiated unit exposes the variation which occurs between households as well as within them, so that no one (migrant or non-migrant) household can be assumed. Of course, certain differences, for example in household structure, can be observed while
holding the household as a unit in itself. Other differences however, such as the interaction of the ideologies of household members, can be approached only when the household as a unit is deconstructed. Migration does not take only one form, nor does it have any one pre-defined impact on households which have a migrant, and part of the variation which occurs is due to the differentiation which exists between households. In the following chapter I extend this theme of differentiation by discussing how the experience of migration is conditioned by gender.
Chapter Six: The gendered experience of migration: motivations, border crossings and return

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I move on to look at movement across the border in both directions, and reasons for this movement. My explicit concern is to emphasise how gender is linked inextricably with the migration experience in terms of motivation, the physical act of migrating and crossing the border, and return. The experience of migration can be seen to be the outcome of individual, household and societal factors, all of which contribute to the gendering of the migration experience, but also to its diversity, so that differentiation occurs not just between women and men, but also amongst women and amongst men. The gendered household approach is used here to act as a framework for the study of migration as both an individual and a structural phenomenon.

In the first section of this chapter I look at the motivations for migration, although I recognise and discuss the inherent problems of assigning such motivations to migration behaviour. I show that the division between women as non-migrants or family migrants and men as economic labour migrants, which is often present in the literature, is oversimplified. I also identify the role of adventure as a significant motivator of migration. In the second section I look at experiences of border crossing and address the issue of legal or undocumented migrant status. I discuss the dangers involved in undocumented border crossing and point to the way in which these risks are gendered. I then turn to the gendered nature of the strategies which are employed to cope with migration and border crossing. In the final section my focus is on return migration. This is an important phenomenon, though one which is largely neglected in the migration literature. I discuss some of the reasons for return in this section, including the desire to reassert Mexican cultural values and reject US culture. Undocumented status is also characterised as a source of instability and an incentive to return. In short, my aim in this chapter is to examine the interaction of gender with the migration process throughout the migration cycle of decision-making, movement and return.
6.2 Motivations

In much of the migration literature, men are seen as migrants and women as non-migrants (Buijs, 1993; Melville, 1978; Pedraza, 1991; Recchini de Lattes, 1988). As I observed in Chapter Five, this opinion was also shared by some of the people who participated in the household survey, reflecting the traditional view of male and female roles.

Men go, and leave their wives here to look after the children. (Serena, a 27 year-old single woman whose father was a recurrent migrant to California for 10 years, first working on farms and later in a restaurant kitchen.)

Many of the migrants identified in the study communities however were in fact women. As can be seen from Table 6.1, this applied to all categories of migrants. In migrant households, more than a third of migrants in the US at the time of the survey, ie. current migrants, and almost half of those who had returned, were women. Similarly, amongst the children of respondent household heads who had experience of US migration, 38 per cent were female, and of the household heads who themselves had migrated to the US at some time in their lives, the same proportion, 38 per cent, were women.

Table 6.1 Sex of migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Current migrants (%)</th>
<th>Return migrants (%)</th>
<th>Migrant children (%)</th>
<th>Migrant household heads (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=35 n=43 n=95 n=47

Other recent work also indicates that women may be increasingly involved in the Mexican migration flow to the US (Carrillo and Hernández, 1988; Cornelius, 1990a,1991; Donato, 1993; Durand and Arias, 1993; Simon and DeLey, 1984; Vernez and Ronfeldt, 1991). Recognising women as migrants where they were previously invisible is important (Morokvasic, 1984; Pedraza, 1991). This does not necessarily mean that women’s participation in migration streams is new. In the Mexican context, women have a long tradition of migration to the US. For instance, the mass deportations from the US which took place during the Great Depression of the 1930s drew attention to the large numbers of female migrants (Durand and Massey, 1992). Another common view in the migration
literature is of men as the pioneering, leading migrants, and women as passive, dependent, following migrants (Buijs, 1993; Kossoudji and Ranney, 1984; Recchini de Lattes, 1988; Solarzano-Torres, 1987). It is argued here that this is an oversimplification. From this perspective, men are seen as economic labour migrants, while women are viewed as family migrants whose migrations are contingent on the movement of men. Again, this is an opinion with some currency in the study sites.

Men are more adventurous, and the women who go have the support of the men who go first.  
*(Elsa, a 48 year-old mother of four, with three nephews living in the US.)*

International migrations are thus frequently characterised as flows of male labour migrants, which may then generate a secondary flow of family migrants, largely women and children, who migrate for the purpose of family reunification (Böhning, 1974; Houston et al., 1984). Motivations are therefore generally seen as either economic or familial (Skeldon, 1990). Assigning motivations to migration is inherently problematic. Firstly, many studies are based on aggregate data which does not contain information on individual migrants, and which equates conditions at the migrant destination (e.g. level of income) with the reason for migration (e.g. economic improvement) (Winchie and Garment, 1989). Secondly, motivations are often multiple, so that categorisation on the basis of just one reason can be reductive, and interpretations of priorities have to be made by both the respondent and the researcher in making these categorisations. Thirdly, there is the problem of post-rationalisation; return migrants, for instance, may be more likely to classify their response in terms of what occurred, rather than what initially motivated the migration. It is widely acknowledged that migrant behaviour does not always equate perfectly with intent (e.g. Bean et al., 1990b). Categorisations of motivations thus:

> represent the post hoc reflections of migrants about their prior behaviour. The methodological inadequacies of this approach for inferring pre-move decision-making are obvious. 'Reasons for moving' statements may reflect pre-move motives, but may also be rationalised proxy, as known and verbalised by the respondents, for the multiple motives that underlie migration decisions.  
*(De Jong and Fawcett, 1981:35-35)*

Fourthly, further difficulties arise when respondents are not themselves migrants. This is particularly pertinent here, as current migrants were by definition in the US at the time of the survey in the Mexican study communities and hence information about them was collected from other members of the sending household. This further complicates the matter of classification by imposing yet another layer of interpretation and possible
misrepresentation. Moreover, the migrant may not have communicated all or even any of their intentions to the respondent, so that the respondent's assessment of the motivation may be an interpretation not of what was said to them but of what they observed and deduced, which may have been still further removed from the real reason for the migration.

Taking into account these drawbacks, it may be argued that labelling migrants on the basis of their motivations is an unproductive exercise which obscures as much as it reveals. On the other hand, most migration studies do consider motivations, and since most are conducted in the host society, there is a case for contrasting the results of such research with findings from sending communities. Bearing in mind the reservations discussed above, Table 6.2 shows the motivations assigned to migrations from the study communities. The classification of motivations was based on answers to the open question, 'Why did you (or s/he where the respondent was providing information about someone else) go to the US?'. The categories work, family and adventure were decided upon on the basis of these answers, although of course not all replies were clear-cut and some judgements had to be made on my part.

Table 6.2 Reasons for the migration of migrants aged 16+

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for migration</th>
<th>Migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The predominance of work as a motive is clear, as is the subsidiary importance of family reasons. The latter were taken to include both migrating to join family members and migrating to accompany family members. Such a sharp polarisation of the underlying reasons for migration overlooks a third cause of movement to the US. As can be seen from Table 6.2, 'adventure' accounts for 28 per cent of the migrations. By 'adventure' I refer to migrations initiated out of a desire to experience a different country, culture, and way of life, or out of a wish to do something new and adventurous.
When I went it was just for the adventure, and I liked some parts of it, but I missed my country, especially the food!
(Pedro, see page 135)

I do not wish to imply here that these migrants do not take up work - 85 per cent of the migrants whose motivation was classified as adventure were later employed in the US. Images of the US are a strong presence in Mexico, not least because of the media, and working in the US may in fact constitute the adventure itself. Target migration is generally assumed to consist of short-term migration to fulfil a specific economic goal, for example house or land purchase, but it has also been suggested that the 'target' or goal of such migration is not necessarily economic, but can be, for example, the experience of living abroad and seeing a different way of life (King et al., 1983). Nor would I want to suggest that none of those who migrate for adventure live, at least for part of the duration of their migration, with family or relatives already in the US. What I am arguing is that while subsequent behaviour may not conform to, or only partially conform to, our conception of what a migration for adventure should entail, this does not detract from the validity of adventure as a motivation for migration.

Although the role of adventure and curiosity as an incentive to migrate is a neglected variable in the literature, it has been noted on occasion (e.g. Altamirano, 1995; Arroyo et al., 1991; Dwyer, 1994). In a study of rural migrant-sending areas in Jalisco, Jésus Arroyo et al. (1991) found that nine per cent of the first trips of migrants were said to have conocer y aventurar¹ as the principal motive. In the same study, it was argued that migrants from areas only recently incorporated into the migration process were more likely than those from areas with a long history of migration to go to the US out of a sense of adventure. Following this reasoning, it may be expected that the motive of adventure would be more common amongst migrants from large urban centres, since these areas are relatively new sources of migrants. In the urban communities of this study, it seems that more than a quarter of migrations are initiated at least partially because of a desire for adventure.

It is important to recognise, when the desire to experience international travel, or to work abroad in a 'year out', is widely accepted in the 'developed world', that similar drives may

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¹ To get to know it and to have an adventure. The phrase conocer y aventurar was also used frequently by respondents in the study communities to describe the reason for migration.
also occur in the less advantaged 'developing areas'. This is not to suggest that these processes are identical, or that young Mexican migrants from low-income areas operate in the same economic, social, or psychological contexts as privileged 'Western' students or 'travellers'. It should be noted however that the urge for new experiences is not one confined to the 'developed world', leaving the migrants of the 'developing world' to be viewed as passive prisoners of economic constraints or social obligations.

While Table 6.2 exposes adventure as a significant yet much ignored reason for migration, it conceals the difference which exists between male and female motives. Table 6.3 reveals the importance of family reasons for women migrants, and contrasts this with the predominance of work as a motivation for men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for migration</th>
<th>Female migrants (%)</th>
<th>Male migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=20</td>
<td></td>
<td>n=33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2 = 11.304 \) with 2 degrees of freedom

\( H_0: \) There is a significant difference between female and male migrants in their motivations for migration

According to these data, women are most likely to migrate as part of a family migration, or for family reunification, going to the US because other members of their household or family are going or have already gone. This is not unexpected given the findings of previous research (Donato, 1993; Houston et al., 1984; Reichert and Massey, 1979). Yet at the same time, defining men as economic migrants and women as family migrants obscures the more complex patterns which underlie this simplistic division. Assuming that because women migrate for family reasons they are also passive and dependent overlooks the considerable degree of autonomy which some women may exercise in the decision whether or not to migrate, as discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, although the motivation for their migration may have been family-based, many women migrants do in fact take up paid work once in the US, effectively transforming themselves into labour migrants in the same way as was noted above for 'adventure migrants'. Fifty-five per cent
of all female migrants aged sixteen and over have or had paid employment outside the home in the US. This proportion rises to 78 per cent of current migrants, ie. those still in the US at the time of the survey. Yet while people who migrate for adventure are invisible in migration research because they are classified as economic migrants when they begin work in the US, female family migrants who also obtain paid employment in the US often continue to be categorised as family migrants.

Another reason to take issue with the notion that the migration of women for family reasons inevitably means that female migration is contingent on the decisions and migrations of others is the incidence of mothers of migrants making extended visits to the US to visit their children. Although the impulse for these migrations is strongly family-based, the migrations themselves are independent. There are signs that such movements are not insignificant.

I was in Tijuana recently to visit a friend. I wouldn’t cross without papers, but there are lots of women up there on the border waiting for a chance to cross illegally and visit their children. I met a woman who’d arranged some false papers, and she was going to visit her son.

(Susana, a 43 year-old mother of seven children. She has a daughter who lives in Los Angeles and is studying, and a son who worked in the construction industry there for almost a year the year before.)

A further example is Esperanza (see page 147), who had been in the US visiting her daughter for almost a year at the time of the survey, despite the fact that her family in Mexico wanted her to return. These women are making their own decisions, their concern about their migrant children and their desire to see them overriding other influences, including opposition from within their household.

A further situation in which family-motivated but nonetheless independent female migrations can occur is when women go to the US to care for their migrant daughter’s children, ie. their grandchildren. Such migrations generally occur when the migrants’ daughters are unable to care for their children themselves full-time because of employment commitments. This circumstance is thus also illustrative of the participation of female migrants, especially the younger ones, in the US labour market, even though according to most standard migrant classification systems they may be ‘family migrants’. A further point to note here, which I will pick up later in this chapter, is the unwillingness of many
female migrants to entrust the care of their children to strangers or to privatised, group, child-care institutions; hence the 'migrant grandmothers'.

It's easier for women to get work there ... But here it's easier to find someone to look after the children while you're at work. My mother went there to look after my sister's children. (Cecilia, a 27 year-old mother of two with her own hairdressing business, whose sister lives in California.)

While not representing a quantitatively substantial part of the total migration flow, such cases demonstrate how subsuming all women under the category of family migrants fails to reflect the variety of motivations involved, and casts female migrants as passive whereas in fact their decision, even though made in the context of family influences, may represent considerable independence of decision-making or action.

While men are assumed to be labour migrants, it is only recently that women have been seen in this role. As emphasised above, female migration for family reasons does not preclude female employment on arrival in the US. In addition though, a flow of independent female labour migrants has been identified (Baca and Bryan, 1985; Chaney, 1982; Cornelius, 1991; Curry, 1988; Solarzano-Torres, 1987). Table 6.3 shows that 25 per cent of women migrated for work reasons. There are several explanations of this rise in female economic migration. Three are identified here, though these are closely interlinked.

First is the inadequacy of the income of the male household head as a family wage (Cornelius, 1991; Roberts, 1989). This means that, through economic necessity, women have had to look for work, regardless of either their own or their husbands' opinion of working women (LeVine, 1993). This change was commented on by several respondents.

Today women have to work as well, or else the man has to earn a very good wage. It's easier for women to get jobs now, and they're in all kinds of work. It used to be different, but now women are studying more, there are more professional women, more women in everything. Before all you did if you were a woman was get married. (Cecilia)

Hence more women have experience of waged work, which may stimulate their migration to look for higher wages and improved employment conditions in the US. In other words, women are beginning to act in the same way as men are seen to act in the classic scenario of labour migration. Alternatively, the need to generate an income to maintain the
Comparing undocumented male and female migrants who were heads of household, Leo Chávez (1988) claims that women were less likely to be married than men, but more likely to have children. This suggests that single mothers have a relatively high propensity to migrate, an assertion which is supported by data from the study areas. María is a 53 year-old widow. She migrated to Los Angeles, where she lived for eight years, because she had three dependent children, and felt that she had no choice. She thought that she could not find work in Guadalajara, where she says not many women work outside the home. This is in fact not the case - 22 per cent of female household heads in the sample had paid work outside the home, for instance - but María, who had never worked outside the home before, believed that it was much easier for women to obtain jobs in the US. She found work in the US as a sales assistant in a jewellers’, and left her children in her mother’s care. She returned to Guadalajara once a year to visit them, and sent regular remittances to her mother for their upkeep. She now lives permanently in one of the study communities, where she has her own house, and no longer works - she is now supported financially by her children.

Violeta is a single mother who lives in California. She migrated alone 18 years ago, at the age of 24, to look for a job to support her children. Like María, she left her children in the care of their grandmother, but unlike María, she later took them to live with her in the US. She is still single, and has a job as a packer in a factory. She also receives some financial assistance from the US state because several of her children are US citizens.

Single mothers who are solely responsible for the economic support of their children may find themselves in a household with a large number of dependants and little flexibility of income generation. They may thus see migration as one way of escaping the financial difficulties of attempting to bring up a family with the income of just one, almost inevitably low-paid, job. Of course there are other options - not all single mothers migrate to the US - but these may be dependent on having access to other sources of income or to networks of social and economic support. These women, moreover, often relatively distanced from male authority, may be more able to act on their desire to migrate than

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others. Migration may also be an escape from non-economic problems, including the stigma still sometimes attached to single motherhood, as the following comment implies.

I don’t think she’ll come back, because she suffered a lot here, and things are better for her there.

(Violeta’s mother)

Second, and related to the increased participation of women in the labour market, is a general change in the attitudes and expectations of Mexican women (Cornelius, 1991). As discussed in Chapter Five, women are increasingly educated, if to a fairly low level; less willing to accept male domination and female subordination as natural; and more likely to want to move beyond the confines of the household into paid employment, either out of a desire for greater self-fulfilment, or out of the wish to be able to contribute to the maintenance of their household (Chant, 1987; LeVine, 1993). A gradual change in the perception of women as something more than wives and mothers is thus evident. This change makes female migration more acceptable, and more compatible with the role of financial contributor which is increasingly being taken on by many Mexican women.

The two factors discussed above influence the supply of female economic migrants, and are linked to change in the Mexican economy and society; a third is concerned with the demand which exists for them in the US. There has been a rise of new employment opportunities for women in the US (Chapin, 1989; Cornelius, 1991), in particular in the service and care industries (Dwyer, 1994; González, 1984; González de la Rocha, 1993) and in modern manufacturing industry (Sassen, 1988; Simon and DeLey, 1984). I will discuss this in more depth in Chapter Seven.

Yet potential female economic migrants are sometimes constrained by family responsibilities and anxieties.

I wanted to go there to earn money, a few years ago I was very excited about the thought of going there to work. But then I decided not to in case my children got out of control while I was away.

(Ruth, a 45 year-old woman, who works as a domestic, and is separated from her husband who lives in Los Angeles. She lives with her father, her sister and her sister’s two young children. She has five daughters of her own, all of whom have left home.)

It is likely that the pressure on women to put family interests first is more intense than the corresponding force on men, because of the traditional role models in Mexican culture which cast women primarily as wives and mothers, even though this traditional view may
be slowly broadening somewhat. Women's first priority is conventionally the emotional care and nurturing of their family, in the context of the home, whereas men are supposed to be breadwinners, oriented towards the economic support of the family through participation in the outside world of work (e.g. LeVine, 1993; Lewis, 1959, 1961). Most often this sense of family obligation is expressed in the form of a woman's commitment towards her children, as in the case above, but the stability of the marital relationship is also an issue if the woman plans an independent migration.

I had an offer to go there [the US] about five years ago. I could have taken my youngest child but no-one else. I didn't go because I didn't want to split up the family. And I would have been scared to leave my husband behind, he might have gone off with another woman. (Soledad, a 35 year-old mother of three, who looks for paid employment from time to time when the family really needs the money.)

In rural communities with strong traditions of out-migration, young men have commonly migrated to the US on a short-term basis as a sort of test, a rite of passage to adulthood, mixed with a desire for independence (Escobar et al., 1987). This can also be seen to be occurring in the study sites in Guadalajara.

People go there for adventure, especially young men, because of the fashion of going there. (Juliana, a 49 year-old single woman who lives alone. She is a primary school teacher, and she lived in California for a year about 20 years ago, working in various temporary jobs.)

Yet the fact that in the survey, 20 per cent of female migrants were also said to have migrated out of a sense of adventure (see Table 6.3), is particularly telling in the context of what is traditionally acceptable for Mexican women. The average age of these migrants was 25 years. The fact that young female migrants are going to the US for no real compelling reason (in a conventional economic-familial sense) is strongly supportive of the idea of a shift in the traditionally rigid norms governing women's behaviour that I discussed in Chapter Five.

I just went to stay with my sister, to see what it was like. I liked it, so I ended up staying. I got a job in a restaurant so I could stay longer, and buy clothes and things. (Rosa, a 34 year-old mother of three. She spent a year in California four years earlier, before she was married, and still has three brothers and sisters there.)

Such migrants are indulging their own wishes, a privilege previously granted mainly to men, with women traditionally expected to be 'self-abnegating', to suppress their own
desires and submit themselves to the needs of 'the family', first that of their parents, then later, after marriage, their own. To accommodate these considerable breaks with established gendered behaviour, new conventions are being instituted, such as a heavier reliance of women on social networks of migration as a legitimation for their migration. This theme will be raised in the following section.

I have argued in this section that while a majority of women migrate for family reasons, and a majority of men for economic reasons, the reality is more complex than this simple categorisation suggests. One complicating factor is the role of adventure as a motive for the migration of both men and women. Moreover, family migrants are implicitly assumed to be contingent migrants, while I have attempted to show here that women who migrate for family reasons can show a great deal of autonomy and independence. On the other hand, the strength of family obligations can in some cases prevent female migration.

In addition, I have exposed an inconsistency in the manner in which migrants are categorised. While migrants who originally migrate for adventure tend to be classified as labour migrants because of their subsequent employment, migrants, mainly women, whose migration is stimulated by family considerations continue to be seen as family migrants regardless of whether or not they later obtain paid work as immigrants in the US. Not only does an analytical framework which favours a strict binary division between economic and familial motives for migration overlook the role of other considerations such as adventure, but it is also pre-disposed to stereotype female and male migrants. It tends to see female migrants as family migrants because of its lack of interest in their ensuing activities and its assumption that labour migrants are men. Family motives are seen as a sufficient basis for an enduring migrant classification, partly because many legal female immigrants enter the US through their eligibility for family reunification entry and partly because of the biased assumption on the part of both researchers and data-collectors that women are secondary migrants. In contrast, adventure is not viewed as a sufficient ground for categorisation and migrants who migrate for this reason are thus assigned economic motives as a result of their taking on a job in the US.

It seems that the adventure motive is generally regarded as being overridden by subsequent behaviour. Someone who has a job is not seen as living out an adventure. In this sense, such an approach is guilty of the same kind of retrospective rationalisation often attributed
to migrants themselves: if migrant behaviour does not conform to the expectation generated by the professed motivation, the migration is classified according to the observed behaviour, regardless of any contradictory motivations. This is partly due to the inability of most models of migration to incorporate multiple motivations, partly to the tendency to assign ‘safe’ and ‘rational’ economic or familial motives wherever possible.

Migrants who migrate to be with their family usually remain with them even if they take on employment. Hence their behaviour is seen as consistent with their motivation. Where women secure paid work, they can be portrayed as using employment to extend their family role, thereby rationalising away any apparent discrepancy between migrant behaviour and the motivation expressed. This discrepancy is in itself the product of gender bias on the part of researchers who assume that women are non-working family migrants economically dependent on the ‘principal’ (male) migrant. Alternatively, the activities of women migrants at their destination are largely ignored, so that there is no concern for their role beyond that of family migrant.

Since women are more likely to be driven initially by family issues, men by work or adventure (see Table 6.3), this inconsistent approach reinforces the stereotypes of men as economic migrants, women as familial ones, through the under-estimation of the former as workers in the US and an over-estimation of the latter as pure labour migrants.

6.3 The border

The US-Mexico border has been characterised as the site of a constant cat and mouse struggle between the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS), particularly the Border Patrol, and Mexican undocumented immigrants (Kossoudji, 1992), and as a ‘war zone’, with immigrants as ‘the enemy’ (Jiminez, 1992). Undocumented immigrants are also known as mojados or ‘wetbacks’. This term is derived from the time when many migrants swam the Río Grande to reach the US. It characterises anyone who enters the US illegally from Mexico, and therefore carries the unavoidable connotation of someone who has broken the law (Bustamante, 1972). ‘Wetback’ was originally used in a descriptive sense, but gradually became a label or stigma, particularly after the establishment of the Border Patrol in 1924, when violators of immigration laws began to
be seen as deviants (ibid.). It is often used in the US as a generic derogatory term for all Mexican immigrants, but is also common parlance in Mexico, where it seems to have retained more of its descriptive function, although it may also be used in the more subversive sense in which the 'labelled' ironically reclaim the language used to label them. Several respondents joked that they would not become migrants because they wanted to 'stay dry'.

It has been claimed that US immigration law is enforced selectively and in practice discriminates strongly against latinos, with border policing and victimisation by law enforcement officers particularly focused on people of Mexican-origin, including US citizens of Mexican descent (Jiménez, 1992; National Human Rights Commission, 1991). Sixty-seven percent of all migrants recorded from migrant households in the random survey lacked official documents when they went to the US on their last trip, and were thus potential targets of the INS. Crossing the heavily-policed border between Mexico and the US illegally can be both traumatic and dangerous (Dwyer, 1994; Halsell, 1978). It may entail the risk of arrest and deportation, and the human rights record of the US Border Patrol is at best patchy (Jiménez, 1992; National Human Rights Commission, 1991; Tactaquin, 1992). The crossing itself can be perilous, not just because of the Border Patrol, but also because of the risks of accidental drowning in the Río Grande, or death from exposure in the harsh desert conditions of the area near the border (see Davis, 1993; Halsell, 1978).

Using the services of a skilled smuggler or coyote significantly improves the chances of successful entry into the US (Taylor, 1987, in Lindstrom, 1991). However, the coyotes who are hired to smuggle undocumented migrants across the border pose a further risk. The place, the price and the terms of payment (typically one third down-payment, one third paid at the border and one third once across) are subject to negotiation (Conover, 1987, in Kossoudji, 1992). Some coyotes exploit migrants by demanding more money part-way through the journey: in the middle of hostile and unfamiliar territory, migrants are particularly vulnerable to such extortion. There are also tales of coyotes robbing, raping and even murdering migrants (see Davis, 1993). Others work in tandem with US employers, increasing their own profits by charging both the employers and the migrants, and increasing the exploitation of the migrants by trapping them in what is often extremely low-paid work in appalling conditions.
There are signs that the US government is tightening its border controls. For example, 'Operation Gatekeeper' was introduced on 1 October 1994 to increase the efficiency of the Border Patrol of the San Diego stretch of the border. As a result, apprehensions increased by more than 500 per cent in the following year. Consequently, the cost of coyotes has risen dramatically in this area from about $100-150 to as much as $500-700. 'Gatekeeper' has also pushed migrants attempting to cross into the US without documents further east, away from the most heavily patrolled zones, and into more remote areas of canyons and desert. This has substantially raised the physical risks of border-crossing, and several deaths have already occurred.

The dangers of the border crossing were widely recognised by the respondents in my research sites, and respondents were also aware of the effects of US immigration policy on tightening up border control. Yet this recognition was not generally associated with any expected decrease in the flow of Mexicans across the border.

The Border Patrol is stronger now, they used to let illegal migrants, la gente fea y pobre, pass to do the work the Americans didn’t want to do. But it’s going to be very difficult to control immigration. People will carry on migrating because of the economic difficulties here and the connections they have there with their families... Also you can easily buy false documents.

(Pancho, 53 years old, married, and with one daughter from a previous marriage. He has a small land-holding that he works himself. He spent eight years in the US before his second marriage, living in Chicago, California and Indiana, working first in agriculture, then in restaurants. He used the money he earned to buy the land and build the house he has now.)

The conventional wisdom in the literature is that it is generally men who take these risks, with a majority of the undocumented migrant flow being male (Jones, 1984; Morales, 1987; Reichert and Massey, 1979; Samora, 1971). Some research however, especially but not exclusively the more contemporary, has commented on the increasing participation of women in undocumented migration (Bean, Espenshade et al., 1990; Halsell, 1978; Melville, 1978; Passel and Woodrow, 1984; Simon and DeLey, 1984; Woodrow and Passel, 1990). Data from the study sites (see Table 6.4) indicate that there is no

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3 'The poor and ugly people'.

169
significant difference between the proportions of men and women who migrate to the US illegally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal status</th>
<th>Female migrants (%)</th>
<th>Male migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 0.055$ with 1 degree of freedom

$H_0$: There is no difference between the legal status of male and female migrants

Yet despite the equal participation of men and women from the research communities in undocumented migration, it was generally perceived that crossing the border without documents was more dangerous for women.

Lots die crossing the border. You run a lot of risks crossing the border, but it's easier for men.

(\textit{Carmel, see page 149})

This is partly because men are thought to be physically more able and daring, more accustomed to facing potentially risky situations and thus more able to look after themselves. Women, in contrast, more used to the sheltered\textsuperscript{4} confines of the household, are viewed as being less prepared to face such ordeals. However, neither are men seen as being impervious to risk, nor necessarily much better-equipped than women to deal with the dangers, as can be seen from María Luisa's phrase below, 'men know a bit more '...'

(my emphasis).

I went once to try as a wet-back, and I felt like a criminal. They caught me and the children, and sent us back - I would never try again. It's much more difficult for women to cross, men know a bit more about how to look after themselves.

(\textit{María Luisa, 33 year-old mother of four.})

The notion of enhanced risks for women during the border crossing is partly due to the perception of hazards specific to women, namely, rape and sexual assault.

\textsuperscript{4} The use of the word 'sheltered' is meant to convey the opinions of a group of the respondents; it is not meant to preclude the possibility of domestic violence, or less extreme conflicts, in some households.
It's easier for men [to cross the border]. Sometimes they do things they shouldn't do to women if you cross with a coyote. Well, they get abused. (Eugenia, a 49 year-old mother of eight, with a brother living and California and working in a fast-food restaurant.)

This acted as a disincentive to some women, who stated that they would not migrate without documents precisely because of the risks they believed they would face if they attempted to do so. These threats can also act as a legitimation of parental opposition to the prospective migrations of their daughters, or of men's prevention of their wife's migration. Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) asserts that Mexican men often rationalise their reluctance to take their wives with them as an unwillingness to expose them to the rigours of clandestine border crossing and of undocumented life in the US, but at the same time they fear a loss of patriarchal control. In turn, the less experience women have, the weaker the basis they have on which to challenge this male account. Hence men are able to manipulate the real and perceived dangers of the border into a mechanism to control the spatial mobility of women.

The undocumented migration of women does occur, however, as is clear from Table 6.4, and where it does, it prompts a range of anxieties on the part of the migrant's family, because of the dangers they face.

It's more dangerous for women to cross the border. I was very scared when my daughter went because of all the stories of sheriffs raping and killing women on the border. (Susana, see page 161)

Hence, both the border crossing and general perceptions of it are gendered, and although this does not prevent undocumented female migration, it may affect the relative strategies which women and men employ in their attempts to cross the border undetected. Men seem to be more likely to use coyotes to guide them across the border. The INS is being expanded in the wake of IRCA and subsequent legislation and in response to public opinion about the threats which undocumented immigration poses (Heyck, 1994; Kossoudji, 1992). The INS announced in early 1996 that much of that year's increased $2.6 billion budget would be spent on the prevention of undocumented immigration. It will expand its computerised fingerprinting system of apprehended migrants and increase the number of Border Patrol agents. It will also more than double the number of workplace inspectors and target employers in garment, agricultural and other industries.
known to employ undocumented immigrants. Migrants are aware of the increasing militarisation of the border in places and of the stepped-up interior enforcement of immigration policy, as already stated, but this does not seem to deter attempts, often multiple, to cross to el otro lado (Cornelius, 1990b; Massey et al., 1990).

The first time I crossed illegally it was very hard. You have to know a coyote, and it's better if you have relatives to help you. How good the coyote is partly depends on how much you pay them. The crossing is hard, lots of people die. I think it's more difficult now than when I first went. You always have to watch out for la migra - you have to run, or hide, or go back to Mexico and then try again another time. Some men get caught five or six times, but I never got caught.

(Fernando, see page 130)

It does seem though, that women, like María Luisa, quoted above, are more likely than men to be put off making further efforts if they are apprehended. In place of making the crossing with a coyote, it seems that more women use false documents provided by suppliers both in Mexico and the US, and often procured with the help of migrant relatives. It has been reported that since IRCA in 1986, there has been a huge growth in the production and sale of fraudulent documents (Bustamante, 1994; Cornelius, 1990b; Heyck, 1994; Kossoudji, 1992). At times the gendered use of border-crossing strategies is such that women and men within the same household employ different methods to cross at the same time. This was the case for Blanca and her husband.

I crossed illegally with false papers that my brothers arranged for me. At Tijuana me and my husband were separated - I used my papers, but he went across with coyotes. It was a very difficult journey and I wouldn't want to do it again. I didn't eat for almost 24 hours, and I was pregnant.

(Blanca, a 29 year-old mother of three. She and her husband migrated to Los Angeles nine years ago. She stayed for three years, her husband for four, and while she was there she worked in a supermarket. She has six sisters and brothers who still live there.)

Women are also less likely to migrate alone than are men, as is clear from the data presented in Table 6.5.

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5 Electronic mailing of Migration News 3(3).
6 Literally, 'the other side', meaning the other side of the Mexican border, the US.
7 The US Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS).
Table 6.5 Likelihood of male and female migrants aged 16+ to migrate alone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female migrants (%)</th>
<th>Male migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrated alone</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrated with others</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=21</td>
<td>n=36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 9.747$ with 1 degree of freedom

$H_0$: There is a significant difference between male and female migrants in terms of their accompanied status

This is partly because more women are involved in family migration, but it is also evidence of a defensive strategy employed by women, often at the insistence of their families. Concern about eventualities such as those discussed above may be used to encourage the female migrant to travel with another family member. This has been called the ‘shield effect’, ‘stemming from the ideology of female inferiority, and the perception that women are more vulnerable than men to exploitation outside the home’ (Lindstrom, 1991:15). This ‘shield effect’ simultaneously reflects the enhanced dangers which are perceived as affecting women and the reluctance to grant women free, unsupervised movement.

Overall then, while women and men are equal participants in undocumented migration, this does not mean that the experience of crossing the border without documents is gender-neutral. Perceptions of the dangers confronted are highly differentiated by gender. Both men and women perceive that women undergo higher risks. This partly reflects the conception of women as less able to confront and withstand physical danger, but also incorporates the notion of both coyotes and the US Border Patrol as being more exploitative of women, particularly in terms of sexual harassment or assault. It is also linked to social constructions of the appropriate activities of women which may be used to control women’s movement. The gendered nature of the border as a barrier to be crossed conditions the nature of the strategies employed to do so. These strategies are in turn gendered, with women more likely to use false papers; men more likely to cross with coyotes; and women less likely to migrate unaccompanied.
6.4 Return migration

There is a growing body of research on the (Mexican) immigrant community in the US (e.g. Bean and Tienda, 1987; Chávez, 1992; Fernández-Kelly and Schaufler, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1990; Portes and Rumbaut, 1990). Such research is generally conducted with more settled immigrants. The phenomenon of return migration however has generally been much neglected in the migration literature, and has almost always been one of the more shadowy features of the migration process (Feindt and Browning, 1972). This represents a considerable oversight as many international migrants intend to return to their place of origin eventually (King, 1978).

In the Mexico-US context, return migration has always played an important role, leading to metaphors of the total migration process such as ‘the double door’ (Durand, 1994). It has however generally been overlooked or underestimated in statistical terms. An important aspect of return is its voluntary or involuntary nature (Altamirano, 1995). Involuntary returns include the mass deportations during the Great Depression in the US in the 1930s and Operation Wetback in 1954. The line between ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ is now becoming increasingly blurred: the ‘voluntary deportation’ of undocumented migrants apprehended by the INS occurs every day. Parallel to these deportations there has always been a high level of unrecorded voluntary return migration, including both undocumented migrants and migrants with legal status in the US (ibid.).

Douglas Massey and Audrey Singer (1995) calculate that over the period 1965-1989, 86 per cent of all undocumented Mexican entries to the US were offset by the total number of undocumented departures, ie. returns. Other studies suggest that large numbers of legal migrants also continue to maintain homes, families and businesses in Mexico while engaging in seasonal migration (e.g. Dinerman, 1982; Goldring, 1992; Massey et al., 1987; Reichert and Massey, 1979). This return migration moreover often takes place after a relatively short period in the US, and hence such migrants are commonly overlooked in US-based studies of longer-term immigrants. Douglas Massey et al. (1987) calculated that the probability of return was significantly higher for migrants with an urban background in Mexico compared with those with a rural one, making this issue particularly pertinent to my investigation.
The average length of time spent in the US by all migrants from migrant households in the survey was four years. This is long enough to discount the predominance of very short-term seasonal or circular migration, but is hardly long enough to point conclusively towards permanent settlement. Nor can permanent migration realistically be established in most cases, since, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the gap between migrant intentions, even if these could be reliably ascertained, and actual migration behaviour is generally acknowledged to be wide (King et al., 1984). I argue here that there are two parallel migration flows, one of short-term return migrants, one of longer-term 'settled' migrants. This is not a simple distinction between temporary and permanent flows, as long-term migrants may eventually return to Mexico. Nor are the flows strictly parallel for individual migrants, since what was initially intended to be a short-term migration may well become a long-term one, or vice versa. I suggest that at the aggregate level there is nevertheless an identifiable distinction between short-term and long-term migration. I will discuss some of the differences which exist between these two flows in Chapter Seven; here, I establish the existence of the two flows and then focus on return migration.

Of the migrants from migrant households in the study sites, 45 per cent (35 people) of the migrants were current migrants who were in the US at the time of the survey, while 55 per cent (43 people) were return migrants. In terms of the length of time spent in the US, at the time of the survey current migrants had spent an average of 7.2 years there. This represents a minimum figure, as these migrations were ongoing, although of course some of these people may also become return migrants. In comparison, the average stay for return migrants, whose migration had been completed, was only 2.5 years. This difference is statistically significant according to the t-test. This bears out the statement above that many return migrations are relatively short-term, and this makes it unlikely that the experience of such migrants is adequately reflected in research which has been carried out on more settled immigrant communities in the US. In this section my aim is to go some way towards redressing the balance by focusing on just such migrants.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that return can also occur after a substantial period of time in the US. Table 6.6 shows that although almost 80 per cent of return migrations occur within two years of arrival, more than 10 per cent take place after five
years. By way of contrast, the corresponding figures for current migrants are also presented in Table 6.6; it can be seen that more than half the current migrants had already been in the US for six years or more at the time of the survey. This suggests that the tendency towards more settled migration is occurring alongside a continued flow of more short-term, temporary migrants.

Table 6.6 Time spent by current and return migrants in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in US</th>
<th>Current migrants (%)</th>
<th>Return migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 30.995 \] with 4 degrees of freedom

H: There is a significant difference between current and return migrants in terms of the length of time spent in the US

Importantly then, while a tendency for longer-term migration may be observed, particularly among the current migrants, it would seem to exist alongside a continuing flow of short-term return migrants. The co-existence of the two flows is verified by Table 6.7, which indicates that similar proportions of both current and return migration flows, which are used here as rough surrogates of longer-term and short-term flows, were initiated within the same time periods, and there is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the length of time since migration commenced. Thus long-term migration, which

8 Although it is difficult to determine the point at which temporary migration ends and permanent settlement begins, two years would be regarded as long-term or permanent migration according to several definitions adopted in empirical research. For instance, Wayne Cornelius (1991), drawing on Juan Carlos Zazueta and Manuel García y Griego (1982), regards 'long-stayers' as those in the US working or looking for work in December, which is when most short-term or seasonal Mexican migrants return to their home communities. Michael Piore (1979) sees migrants in what he terms the 'settlement phase' as those who have been joined by family and who have widespread contacts with people and institutions outside the migrant enclave.
may be a relatively recent trend\(^9\), has not replaced or displaced short-term movement. In short, the two flows are distinct and parallel.

Table 6.7 Time since the initiation of current and return migrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years since initiation of migration</th>
<th>Current migrants (%)</th>
<th>Return migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\chi^2 = 3.184\) with 2 degrees of freedom

\(H_0:\) There is no significant difference between current and return migrants in terms of the length of time since migration was initiated

Although there is no significant difference between the length of time since current and return migrations were initiated, there are some differences that may be relevant. It can be seen that the proportion of return migrations fell during the period six to 10 years before the survey, rising again in the most recent period, while the proportion of current migrations remained relatively constant across the two periods. The period 1984-1989 is the one in which IRCA was introduced, and it is thus tempting to equate the institution of this law with the apparent fall in return migration around this time.

The effects of IRCA may thus have been differentiated, having more impact on the group of return migrants, associated above with relatively short-term migrations, than that of current migrants, linked above with longer-term migrations. This may be because the deterrent aspects of IRCA, specifically those dealing with increased control of the border, discouraged frequent crossing and encouraged short-term migrants to prolong their stay to minimise the risks of border-crossing. Migrants who were able to obtain legal documents through IRCA's family reunification or other legalisation provisions may also have decided to stay in the US longer than they otherwise intended. Whatever the exact impacts of IRCA, its role as a deterrent to short-term migration seems to have been short-lived, as the

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\(^9\) While it has been claimed in some of the literature (e.g. Cornelius, 1991) that long-term and permanent migration on a large scale is a fairly recent phenomenon, my research does not include time-series data and so is unable to substantiate this.
incidence of return migration rose again in the five years preceding the survey despite the fact that the provisions laid down by IRCA remained in place.

IRCA specifically intended to deter undocumented migration, but as can be seen from Table 6.8, there was no significant difference between the amount of legal and undocumented migration from the study sites in the various time periods, including those since IRCA was introduced. From the results presented here it seems that while IRCA may have had some impact on the length of time migrants from the study communities spent in the US, it did little to deter undocumented migration per se.

Table 6.8 Time since the initiation of legal and undocumented migrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years since migration</th>
<th>Legal migrants (%)</th>
<th>Undocumented migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 0.462 \text{ with 2 degrees of freedom} \]

\[ H_0: \text{There is no significant difference between legal and undocumented migration in terms of the length of time since migration was initiated.} \]

Having emphasised the parallel nature of longer-term ‘settler’ and short-term return migration flows, I will now look more directly at return migration. To reiterate, 55 per cent of all migrants from migrant households in the study communities were return migrants. This is in itself an important finding because previous research has suggested that most migrants from urban areas of Mexico become relatively permanent immigrants in the US (Cornelius, 1990a). Return migration is moreover usually associated with independent, generally male, migrants, participating in recurrent seasonal or target migration (Jenkins, 1977; Lowell, 1992; Verduzco, 1990). Leo Chávez (1988) argues that most undocumented migrants living with their families in the US, either because they have formed a family there, or migrated with (or later brought) their family from Mexico, are likely to settle there.

The growth in the permanent settlement of migrant families in the US should not however obscure the fact that family migrations can also be temporary. Sixty per cent of the return
migrants identified in the survey were accompanied in their migration. This figure could, of course, reflect a high proportion of independent migrants migrating with friends or other non-family members, rather than being indicative of family migration. Table 6.9, however, shows the companions of the 60 per cent of return migrants who were accompanied, and it is clear that most were accompanied by immediate family members. This emphasises that US-based studies like those of Chávez, while valuable, tend to ignore the phenomenon of return family migration.

Table 6.9 Companions of all return migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrated with:</th>
<th>Return migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse only</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and children/children only</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=25

Most migrant families go to the US with the hope of economic advancement. Failure to achieve, or to maintain, the desired level of advancement may stimulate a return movement after a relatively short time, especially if some resources, most importantly, a house, remain in Mexico. Gabriela and her family went to the US in an attempt to 'get ahead' financially, leaving their house in the care of Gabriela's mother. They spent two years in California, with Gabriela working in a restaurant kitchen, and her husband as a labourer in construction, before they felt compelled to return home for economic reasons.

I liked it a lot. Work is easy to get if you've got papers - the US is progressing like it is because of hard-working Mexicans doing jobs that North Americans don't want or that aren't well-paid enough. But we didn't have papers, and when my husband lost his job, he couldn't get another one. We couldn't live on just what I earned, so we had to come back. I would like to live there if we had security. The children loved it. (Gabriela, 33 year-old mother of four.)

Gabriela's experience also raises the issue of illegal status as a source of instability. From Table 6.10, it can be seen that current migrants, who as shown above tend to have spent longer in the US, have a relatively even division between those with and those without legal documents, compared with return migrants, who were predominantly undocumented.
Table 6.10 Legal status of all current and return migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal status</th>
<th>Current migrants (%)</th>
<th>Return migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2 = 4.028 \) with 1 degree of freedom

H₁: There is a significant difference between the legal status of current and return migrants

The results given here may be partly due to methodological considerations - people are more likely to cover up the clandestine nature of a current migration than a former one, for the obvious reason of suspicion of my connections and motives as a 'researcher'. Yet it seems unlikely that this factor could account for all of the observed difference. Bearing in mind the short-term nature of many of the return migrations, there are two possible explanations for this divergence. First, return migrants may not have documents because they migrate for only a relatively short period. As a result of their intention to migrate on a short-term basis, such migrants may be less likely to seek documents due to the actual and perceived time, financial expense and uncertainty involved.

Second, return migrants are those people who, because they have no means of obtaining legal documents, return to Mexico after a relatively short period of time in the US. It can be argued that a lack of documents reduces employment prospects and increases feelings of vulnerability (Portes, 1978), so that illegal status and its effects prompts migrants to return sooner than perhaps they would otherwise have done. This is certainly applicable to Gabriela’s experience, and the point was also echoed by other respondents.

10 To enter the US legally, other than as a tourist, migrants must either be an eligible relative of a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the US, or a non-immigrant worker temporarily employed by a US employer for a specific purpose. Such temporary employment usually arises because of unusual or valued skills of experience which the migrant possesses. Although most of the eligible categories in the latter group apply to highly-skilled professionals or entertainers, it also includes the loop-hole granted by IRCA for agricultural workers, who may enter in the category of non-immigrant worker H-2A. It has been suggested that such US policy initiatives and bureaucratic requirements have raised the costs of legal migration by increasing the size of visa backlogs, multiplying the legal expenses associated with documented entry, and inflating the waiting time for the receipt of papers (Massey and Espinosa, 1996).
Nancy, for instance, lived in the constant fear that her children would be ‘picked up’ by the INS at school, or that someone would report them. Her husband worked in casual jobs, and they suffered economically when he could not find work. Nancy also had more personal anxieties: she thinks that her relationship with her husband deteriorated while they were in the US, and that he listened less to her opinion while they were there. She was also more dependent upon him financially in Los Angeles, where she did not have paid work, than in Guadalajara, where she runs a small informal shop from the front room of her house. Yet in spite of the drawbacks, Nancy claims that if she could eliminate the uncertainty caused by lack of documents, she would like to go back. In the end, Nancy’s family came back to Mexico after two years, because they could not afford to rent or buy a house of their own in the US, and were forced to share, a situation of which they grew tired. Like Gabriela, Nancy and her family retained their own house in Guadalajara throughout the duration of their migration. Nancy also thinks that with documents, it would be easier to obtain better-paid and more dependable work.

I liked it there, but we sometimes had problems financially when he [Nancy’s husband] didn’t have a job. It was difficult to pay the rent, the bills, the food, and everything … The children went to school there and they loved it, but the police scared me, they went looking for undocumented children in the schools, to track down their parents … My husband wanted to go out with a Cuban woman he met there, and he went out drinking more. We get on better here. When we were there, we argued more about his drinking, and he went out enjoying himself more, and spent more money … I would like to go again, but not without papers because you suffer too much. If I had papers, I’d go.

(Nancy)

Family migrations may thus be ended when reality fails to match up to expectations. This shortfall is due to a combination of economic and legal insecurity. At the same time, the retention of the family house in Mexico, ‘something to come back to’, enables the return migration to take place and is also suggestive of a lack of intention of permanent settlement at the outset of the migration. This is also consistent with the first explanation for the relative brevity of the majority of undocumented return migrations, suggesting that the two explanations are inter-dependent rather than discrete. For example,

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11 This non-Mexican sounding pseudonym is the choice of the respondent, who, in conversations about how I would preserve the anonymity of the people with whom I spoke, chose this name for herself.

12 Douglas Massey and Kristin Espinosa (1996) claim that the odds of return migration are substantially increased by the possession of land in Mexico, and to a lesser extent by home ownership.
the general intention to return may be crystallised by a migration experience marked by the insecurity which stems from undocumented status. Conversely of course, some people who intend to return become permanent immigrants, often despite their lack of legal status.

The influences on the decision to return that I have discussed thus far have been economic or connected to legal status. Other influences are cultural or familial, and relate to the migrants’ opinion of the US. Table 6.11 indicates that such reasons account for a substantial amount of return migration, although this table is presented with the caveat that motivations are inevitably multiple, as discussed earlier in this chapter. From the table, it is clear that, as for the initial motivations for migration, economic reasons are the most important for men. Similarly, for women, family concerns remain highly influential, although a dislike of the US and its culture is of equal importance. Again though, this simple division does not reflect accurately the reality of return migration, and nor is the difference between male and female motivations for return migration statistically significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for return</th>
<th>All migrants (%)</th>
<th>Female migrants (%)</th>
<th>Male migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work/economic</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike of US</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reasons for return of male and female migrants could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

Because of the pervasive and global nature of US mass culture, it is often assumed that all migrants are willing adherents to the ideology which it encapsulates. This is not always the case. Particularly important in family migration is the extent to which US society is viewed by migrant parents as an appropriate environment in which to bring up their children. Such concerns have been noted elsewhere (LeVine, 1993). Anxieties about children’s education are also a recognised causal factor in return migration in general (King et al., 1983). Some return migrants who participated in the research were found to
be distinctly opposed to the values and way of life to which their children were exposed in the US, and their preference for Mexican customs led them to return so that their children could grow up in a context which better reflected their own ideology.

Lots of women work here [Mexico] out of one form of necessity or another, but the idea that a woman’s place is in the home, and her main purpose is looking after children still exists. It’s not like that in the US, women go to work and leave their children in the care of strangers and you don’t know what they’re learning. That was one of the things I didn’t like when I was there. I want my children to grow up here, and learn Mexican ways. And I can be with them here, I can teach them.

(Blanca, see page 172)

Blanca’s comment is also interesting because it reveals the way she perceives women’s employment in Mexico and the US differently. In Mexico, she believes, women work because they have to, but it seems that she sees women working and leaving their children as a negative part of US culture rather than a response to any specific need. Blanca’s concern about working mothers in the US is also linked to the nature of child-care. A common opinion in the study sites was that in Mexico family and friends were available to ‘help out’ women with work outside the home in terms of child-care, whereas child-care in the US was thought more likely to be impersonal and privatised.

It’s common in the US for both parents to work, and the children are left with people paid to look after them. It’s better here because children are with their mother, or else other members of the family help out. The family here is much more close-knit.

(Marco, a 44 year-old father of three, who works in the Post Office. His wife has seven brothers and sisters who live in California.)

Such attitudes were common, and were seen to act as an impetus to return migration after a variety of time periods. For instance, families who migrate with school-age children may return to Mexico after a relatively short-term migration, having decided quickly not to bring up their children in the US. Other migrants, who set off for the US either independently or as part of a childless couple, may remain in the US for considerably longer before starting a family, only beginning to contemplate a return to Mexico when their children reach an impressionable age.
My wife's relatives all want to come back to Mexico, mainly because they'd prefer to bring their children up here. The children there are much freer, and the family is disintegrating. Children are more badly behaved there, and much more difficult to control, and there's more legal protection for them. They teach them it at school. My seven year-old niece said to her father, 'You can't hit me or I'll call the police and they'll take you away'. Can you imagine, seven years old?!

(Marco)

The role of women in facilitating the permanent settlement of immigrant households has been noted in the literature (Cornelius, 1990b; Pessar, 1985,1988). While the unequal influence that men and women in immigrant households may have in the decision to migrate and return make the issue a complex one, it is too simplistic to conclude that if women had a free choice they would automatically opt for US 'modern' values, and that it is always macho men who initiate and control return migration because of their opposition to the liberation of women. This is often the assumption in the literature.

Two objections can be made to this assumption. Firstly, the supposition that (immigrant) women in the US are necessarily emancipated can be questioned on the grounds of its implicit ethnocentrism. This notion is the subject of further discussion in Chapter Seven. Secondly, women as well as men may rebel against US culture and urge return. This is evident for women such as Blanca who do not want to bring up their children in the US. In fact, women may be more likely than men to reject US values: as can be seen from Table 6.9, dislike of the US accounted for the return of almost three times as many women as men.

In the study sites, women were commonly seen to have had an influential role in urging the return of immigrant households. Elena, for instance, met her future husband while working in the US, and their first child was born there. Her husband had spent 14 years in California, and was very accustomed to life there, but Elena felt a sense of dislocation, and so she persuaded him to return to Mexico. They now live with her parents in Guadalajara.
In some senses it's more comfortable there, but life is too rushed, and it's lonely, because people are always going in and out to work, and the house is often empty. I didn't want to live there, and so we came back. I prefer to live with all my family around me.

(Elena, who is 24 years old and has three young children. She lived in California for 18 months four years before the interview. She lived with her brothers, who are still there, and worked in a factory. She currently works in Gigante, a supermarket.)

Other reasons which motivate return migration thus include a dislike of the domination of ambition and the work-ethic in the US. Many migrants, but particularly women, perceived this as damaging to personal interaction and social communication.

People work too hard there, they have two or more jobs, whereas here you work your eight hours and then you relax and enjoy yourself, visit friends.

In the US there's no time for all that. The people are very cold, very insensitive. They're always too busy, no-one pays any attention to anyone else.

(Rosa, see page 165)

Life in the US was often described as too 'hurried' and impersonal, and many female migrants, like Elena, complained of missing the close family network in which they participated in Mexico. Even if other relatives were present in the US, work schedules were viewed as highly restrictive to maintaining a dense set of interactions, especially if these relatives were spatially separated. Return migrants criticise the alienation, the obsession with money, the polarisation of work and pleasure, and the disciplinary forms of time that characterise advanced capitalist society (see also Alonso, 1988; LeVine, 1993). In other words, return migrants are not dysfunctional failures, unable to adapt to the host society. Many are unwilling to assimilate into US culture, and see return to Mexico as a positive reassertion of their own cultural identity. The resilience of ethnic culture has been characterised as one reaction against assimilation into the receiving society (Portes, 1987); here I suggest that return migration is another, and moreover women as well as men may initiate return migration for this reason.

Emphasising the depth of feeling which some Mexican women have for their country and culture is not meant to suggest that women are innately more conservative and traditional than men, nor that they are less able to adapt to new environments and circumstances. The role of women in some circumstances in prolonging migration because of the improved situation in which they find themselves as immigrants, often in the face of opposition from men, has been noted in the literature (Hondagneu, 1990; Pessar, 1985).
Men too have been seen to reject US culture, although not always for the same reasons as women. To ignore the feelings of allegiance to Mexican culture which many Mexican women (as well as men) have is implicitly ethnocentric. This view seems to deny that Mexican women could have any loyalty to such an oppressive culture as the Mexican one once they have been exposed to the superior and liberated culture of the US. Yet many women do express a strong preference for Mexican culture.

I liked the life there in some ways, and I’d go back to visit, but not to live there again. I was born here, my roots are here. Migration is bad because it’s another country and you lose lots of the traditional customs.
(Blanca, see page 172)

The discussion thus far has revolved around family migrations, but 40 per cent of the return migrants were independent migrants at the outset of their migration (although of course some of these may later have been joined by other household or family members). Sixteen per cent of female migrants, for instance Rosa and María, fell into this category. Sixty one per cent of the male return migrants initially migrated alone. Pancho is a typical target migrant. He migrated to the US on a temporary basis for more than eight years, living in Chicago, California and Indiana, working first in agriculture, then in restaurants. His ‘target’ was to accumulate savings to buy land, then a house, and finally its contents. Now that he has achieved his goal, he says he would not migrate again, although to some extent this is due to his feeling that he is too old to find a niche in the US labour market easily.

I didn’t go with the intention of spending all my money on drink, like some of them do, always with the idea of saving, to get ahead, to progress. My family are very hard-working, I’ve been brought up with the idea of hard work. I bought my land here with what I earned, and built the house, and we’ve got a spare room upstairs ... Not everyone goes with the aim of staying there. Lots want to return eventually, but some end up spending their whole life there because they can’t get organised enough to save up and come back ... I wouldn’t go again, I’m too old, they want to employ young people. If I could have a business of my own, like a restaurant, maybe I would consider it, but not to go there and be unemployed.
(Pancho, see page 169)

Pancho is a successful target migrant, and his final return and subsequent permanent settlement in Mexico were due to fulfilment of this target. His quote also points to the sustained desire of many migrants to return, a desire which can be frustrated by a lack of monetary resources, transforming what was intended to be a temporary migration into more permanent settlement. Retaining this intention to return, even if return is never
actually achieved, is known in the literature as the ideology or myth of return (Anwar, 1979; Brettell, 1979; Rubenstein, 1979).

Francisco migrated to Los Angeles because of the higher wages he believed to be available in the US. He appears to have been a classic economic migrant, being young, male and *de facto* single in the sense that he left his wife and young family behind, and he planned a temporary migration to accumulate some savings. He had no problems securing a job in agriculture, but when he returned to Guadalajara, it was not because he had achieved his target, like Pancho, but because he did not like being separated from his family.

I only went there to earn money, and I missed my family. I came back once for a holiday and just didn’t go back. I wouldn’t go there again.

*Francisco, see page 123*

This example reveals that although male migrations may be predominantly economically-motivated, in reality decisions often cannot be divorced from other, non-economic concerns. From Tables 6.3 and 6.10 it can be seen that while non-economic reasons motivated 47 per cent of male migrations, they accounted for 63 per cent of their returns (the corresponding figures for women are 75 and 85 per cent: the difference between motivations for migration and return was not so marked for female migrants). This illustrates how non-economic concerns are more influential for men in the decision to return than they are in the original decision to migrate. This is borne out by Francisco’s experience.

As well as strengthening the argument against considering men purely as economic migrants (and women as dependent family migrants), this disparity between individual migrants’ motives for migration and return also poses a case for greater consideration of the reasons for return in the overall analysis of the migration process. Simply because a migration is initiated for economic reasons does not automatically mean it will be concluded on a similar basis. Even if this is the migrant’s intention at the outset, other, unanticipated factors may come into play in the stimulus to return, such as the emotional suffering caused by family separation or the perception of the host society as unsupportive of family life. The influence of family-based factors on economically motivated migrations casts doubt on the classification of such migrations as strictly economic. This issue is thus a parallel to the question I raised earlier in this chapter about the classification of women as family migrants regardless of their subsequent behaviour.
Taken together, these criticisms of the categorisation of migrants on the basis of the motivations expressed for their original migration decision bring into question yet again the value of assigning motivations to migration. If assessing the motivation of a migration means that the migration is defined in terms of this motivation as having fixed characteristics, I would agree that the exercise is unproductive and indeed misleading. Yet it can be interesting to look at the intentions behind migrations. I suggest that there is a need to be more aware in our analysis of migration of the gap between motivations and behaviour; it is insufficient to acknowledge theoretically that such a gap exists but then go on to ignore its existence in practice. Neither motivations nor behaviour are invariant or one-dimensional and we need to be more flexible in our interpretations of migration rather than relying on *a priori* assumptions associated with migrations inadequately classified by motivation. We should attempt to move away from generalisations such as ‘labour migrants are ...’ to look more closely at what is involved in any individual migration. Categorising migrant motivations can give a snap-shot (though partial) view of intentions or expressed intentions at a particular moment in time, but I maintain that they should not be used to infer or describe future behaviour.

To recap, return migration is a significant part of the migration process, and one that exists alongside the trend towards more permanent settlement. Reasons for return, like those for the initiation of migration, are varied and often multiple. Return may be the end-point, or it may be a phase in an on-going cycle of recurrent migration and return. The decision to return may be based largely on economic considerations, and undocumented status can be seen to interact with financial concerns to reduce security and increase the impetus for return. Social and cultural concerns are also crucial, and in fact non-economic motivations for return outweighed economic ones for return migrants in the study sites, as can be seen from Table 6.10.

Since the cultural conflict between Mexican and US society has been seen to be a significant contributory cause of migration, I suggest an alternative conceptualisation of return migration. Instead of characterising such return migrants in terms of the receiving society, as social failures unable to adapt, they can be analysed from the point of view of the migrants themselves as a deliberate rejection of US culture. While it may be expected that some Mexican men object to cultural norms in the US which challenge their culturally-sanctioned patriarchal position, some Mexican women also assert their explicit
preference for Mexican values and customs. Mexican men and women may exhibit attachments to different aspects of Mexican culture, so that reasons for return (or the desire for return) are gendered. The most significant point to note here however is that this gendering is not of a form which casts men as economic migrants, women as family migrants. 'Economics' and 'family' may be the predominant motivations of a majority of male and female migrants respectively, but this does not mean that other concerns are not involved. This is linked to the impossibility of reducing migrations to a single motivation and of describing migrants' subsequent behaviour in terms of the original motivation for migration assigned to them.

6.5 Conclusion

In examining the migration experience through its various stages, from motivations, to crossing the border, to return, it has become clear that gender is an important influence in each phase. The conventional migration literature depicts women's and men's experiences of migration as distinct, but does so in a binary and oversimplified manner. From such a perspective, men are economic migrants, women are non-migrants or dependent family migrants; undocumented migrants are generally male, and most female migrants migrate legally.

Yet some of the most important issues to emerge in this chapter directly contradict such conceptions. First, even though the majority of women are family migrants in that their migration is motivated largely by the migration of other family members, this does not preclude them from becoming labour migrants by obtaining paid work at their destination. Neither are family migrants necessarily 'dependent'; the instance of mothers of migrants crossing from Mexico to the US illustrates the considerable degree of autonomy that may be involved in such migrations. Similarly, casting male migrants as purely economic players ignores the extent to which family influences can affect their migration, particularly return migration, decisions.

Second, the economic-familial division, seen in orthodox migration studies as corresponding to male-female, contains a further distortion. This is that other motives are overlooked, when in fact they may account for a substantial proportion of the migration
observed. In this case the adventure motive cannot be ignored - to do so not only misrepresents reality, it also reflects an ethnocentric perspective that assumes people from the ‘developing world’ act only for economic survival or because of kin attachments.

Third, similar proportions of male and female migrants were found to lack documents at the time of their migration. Yet despite the coincidence of numbers, men and women perceived the risks of illegal border crossing as affecting them differently, and as a result often adopted coping strategies which reflected their perceptions.

Arising from the first two points made above is a further criticism of prevailing attitudes in the migration literature. Current theory is predisposed to see men as labour migrants, women as family migrants. This predisposition can blind researchers into classifying women as family migrants even where their behaviour subsequent to migration does not conform to this categorisation, for example when they participate in the labour market. And this is not the only blind spot. Motives which do not fit easily with the economic-familial duality, such as adventure, are largely ignored. This presents a distorted view of reasons for migration, as asserted above, but at the same time reinforces the tendency to characterise men as labour migrants, women as family migrants: female ‘adventure’ migrants become ‘family’ migrants, male ‘adventure’ migrants become ‘labour’ migrants, even if in practice the two behave in a similar manner.

Considering the material I have presented in this chapter, the conclusion must be that it is not possible to rely on the accepted stereotypes of the migration literature when evaluating migration. The influence of gender in shaping the experience of migration cannot be ignored, whether at the individual, household or societal level, but the migration experience of each individual should be considered on its own terms, not in relation to ‘normative’ views of male and female migrants. In this chapter I set out to examine the role of gender in proscribing the migration process, and gender was seen to have an important part to play. A further theme which emerged in this analysis was that of differentiation between women. In the following chapter I pick up and expand upon this theme in investigating the immigrant experience in the US.
Chapter Seven. Living and working as an immigrant in the US: a differentiated perspective

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I look at the immigrant experience of living in the destination country. The focus of the chapter is on the lived experience of Mexican immigrants, particularly women, in the US. I debate the issues of whether migration can bring about transformations of gender relations, and whether or not it should be interpreted as a road to empowerment for female migrants. Although in the previous chapter I concentrated on evaluating the differentiation which occurred in the migration experience along the lines of gender, it emerged that differentiation was also evident not just between women and men but amongst women (and amongst men). Consequently, in this chapter I consider the influence of gender in conjunction with that of other factors such as legal status and migration duration.

I look in the first section of this chapter at how the position of Mexican immigrants in the labour market is structured by the interaction of a range of influences, including gender and legal status. Migration is often assumed to be beneficial for women as a result of two factors: employment and exposure to the culture of the host society. In the second section of this chapter I build on the findings of the first to explore the experience of women immigrants in these two areas. I contest the inference that women's migration from the 'developing world' to the 'developed world' invariably represents a progression from oppression to liberation, arguing that this assumption is flawed because of its inability to distinguish between women and because of its ethnocentricity.

Neither can employment and culture be seen as separate influences, as they often are, with employment representing economic liberation, culture embodying social freedom. In many ways the two are interdependent. For instance, the designation of ‘women’s work’ and the position of (immigrant) women in the labour market reflects a host of cultural constructions, and conversely, the social and cultural construction of women draws much from their economic position. In the conclusion to this chapter I suggest that the experience of migration cannot be evaluated on the basis of one variable alone, be it gender, legal status, ‘race’ or any other factor. Instead it is essential to interpret the
circumstances of migrant individuals with regard to a number of variables grounded in their specific background and current situation.

7.2 Mexican immigrants in the US labour market

The general context for the employment of most Mexican immigrants in the US labour market is one of discrimination, exploitation, and a general lack of worker's rights. Many are concentrated in low-paying, low-status jobs with poor working conditions, low job security, lack of union representation and little chance of upward mobility. Despite the notion, prevalent in both politics and public opinion\(^1\), that immigrants take the jobs of the native population, depress wage levels and contribute to unemployment, research has shown that most Hispanic immigrant jobs are complementary to rather than competitive with the jobs of white workers (Bean \textit{et al.}, 1987,1988; Bustamante, 1977; Reischauer, 1989; Tienda \textit{et al.}, 1984). In other words, immigrants often undertake work that native US citizens are unwilling to do, fulfilling US employers' demand for cheap, flexible, immigrant labour (Sassen, 1981,1988). There is however some debate over whether Hispanic labour acts as a substitute for black labour (\textit{e.g.} Borjas, 1983).

7.2.1 The effects of legal status

It has been suggested that undocumented workers are particularly disadvantaged, with the majority being concentrated in a 'tertiary' labour market, located hierarchically below the primary and secondary labour markets. This market is said to be composed of people who have little or no education and few job skills, who have difficulties with English, who have incurred a stigmatised status (as a result of their ethnic or national origin and/or their lack of legal status) and who are unable or powerless to assert their human and civil rights (González, 1984). The tertiary labour market is generally to be found in the garment and

\(^{1}\) In an opinion poll conducted in the mid-1980s, two-thirds of southern Californians believed that undocumented workers tended to bring down the overall level of wages in some occupations (Borjas and Tienda, 1987). A recent Roper poll of some 2,000 people across the US on public attitudes regarding immigration showed that an overwhelming majority believed it was time to cut back on immigration. Those who supported the lowest levels of immigration were those most likely to face job competition from immigrants, in other words those with the lowest levels of education and the lowest household incomes (CISNEWS mailing of 22 February 1996).
restaurant industries, motels and hotels, hospitals, landscape and construction, and agriculture, *ie.* where wages are lowest and working conditions are unacceptable to US citizens (*ibid.*). According to this view, these are the economic niches in which the majority of undocumented Mexican immigrants are traditionally concentrated.

Echoing this perspective Pancho (see page 169), summarised the situation as follows.

> What the Americans won't do, the Mexicans will, and for less money. The Americans look for better things ... But you have to be a slave to work, everything is work ... If you don’t have documents, they can pay you very badly, and you have to be servile and hard-working. The employers know that the worker can never complain and has to accept everything.
> (*Pancho*)

There is a long-standing debate in the literature as to whether undocumented migrants are in fact paid less than legal immigrants. On the one hand it is argued that there is little discrimination against undocumented migrants *per se* and that any differences are the result of the greater age, education, English language competence and amount of work experience of most legal migrants (*e.g.* Cornelius, 1978). On the other hand some claim that there is a:

> shadow labour force composed of a body of workers totally dependent upon the terms of employment set by employers. Undocumented workers are frequently victimised by employers who know of their vulnerability to detection.
> (*Briggs, 1975: 479-80*)

A more recent project by Douglas Massey (1987a) re-examined this issue, using data and methods specifically chosen to overcome the selection biases characteristic of much former work. He concluded that undocumented migrants do generally earn less than legal immigrants, but that this is primarily a function of background characteristics such as education and work experience rather than of legal status. Massey also emphasised, however, that the presence of large numbers of undocumented workers may drive down the wage rates of entire sectors of the US economy, for example in agriculture, where very low wages are paid to all migrants. Moreover, employers may discriminate equally against documented and undocumented migrants by using ethnic markers to label all (poor) Mexican migrants as ‘illegal’ and therefore exploitable (*ibid.*).
Turning to the study sites in Guadalajara, the mean age of legal migrants at the outset of their migration was 28.3 years, that of undocumented migrants 23.3. In terms of education, legal migrants had completed on average 6.9 years of schooling, undocumented migrants 6.5. While these differences are not significant when compared using the t-test, Table 7.1 illustrates that legal and undocumented migrants from the study communities were distinctly segregated in terms of their sector of employment. Although roughly similar proportions of legal and undocumented migrants worked in the service sector, undocumented migrants were much more likely to work in agriculture and correspondingly less likely to work in manufacturing than were legal migrants.

Table 7.1 Sector of employment in US according to legal status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Legal migrants (%)</th>
<th>Undocumented migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=15 n=28

The employment sector of legal and undocumented migrants could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

As noted above, agricultural workers are paid particularly low wages, and as the work is often seasonal, these workers have no guarantee of a year-round income, nor of being employed the following season. Other research has also argued that undocumented migrants are integrated into society and participate in the economy in a way that leaves them disadvantaged when compared to legal Mexican immigrants and the general population (Chávez, 1988).

If undocumented migrants are employed in generally insecure and low-paying jobs, it may be that they are less likely to settle in the US on a long-term or permanent basis. Earlier work has noted the relationship between economically secure, year-round work and the tendency towards more permanent settlement (Cornelius, 1991). In the previous chapter I observed that current migrants, who on average stayed longer in the US, were more likely to possess legal status than return migrants, who generally stayed in the US for shorter periods and were less likely to have legal documents. In Chapter Six I also argued
that there were two distinct migration flows from the study sites, one of short-term migrants, the other of relatively long-term, potentially permanent migrants, and that these roughly corresponded to the flows of return and current migrants respectively.

Here I return to this theme, and make a more explicit distinction between short-term and longer-term migration, using two years as a convenient though by no means definitive dividing line between the two groups. Short-term migrants were thus considered to be those people who had stayed in the US for two years or less, longer-term migrants as those who had remained for more than two years. Return migrants were classified according to the duration of their stay in the US. Current migrants who had been in the US for two years or less at the time of the survey were excluded from these categories, since there was no way of knowing whether these migrants would return before the end of two years, and hence become short-term returnees, or whether they would stay in the US for more than two years and hence become longer-term migrants. Hence the short-term migrant group consisted only of return migrants.

Table 7.2 illustrates that short-term migrants were much more likely than longer-term migrants to be undocumented. Low wages and job insecurity may thus be factors which help explain the relationship between legal status and length of stay, in addition to those discussed in the previous chapter such as the fear of apprehension by the INS and generalised feelings of vulnerability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal status</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 8.811 \text{ with } 1 \text{ degree of freedom} \]

H\(_0\): There is a significant difference between short-term and longer-term migrants in terms of their legal status.

Legislation such as IRCA, which introduced financial penalties for employers of undocumented immigrant workers, has probably exacerbated the negative aspects of the labour market for undocumented migrants and may also have affected legal migrants and
Hispanic-origin US citizens. All may be subject to a generalised increase in employer prejudice against immigrants and against US citizens of Hispanic origin (Cornelius, 1983; Anderson, 1986). The latter is due to the process of ethnic labelling mentioned above, which may have created a general perception on the part of some employers that all latinos are illegal immigrants and also a reluctance to engage in the process of checking the legal and citizenship status of potential employees.

Employing Hispanic immigrants and citizens also exposes the employer to possible checks by US officials upholding the regulations of IRCA. The budget allocated to the INS has been increased by $511 million for the fiscal year 1996, representing an increase of 24 per cent over 1995 funding and the agency has been allocated almost 400 new officers to increase work-site inspections and enforce the laws forbidding the hiring of undocumented immigrants. Hence, for some employers, it is simply easier not to employ anyone who is or appears to be of Hispanic descent. Nonetheless, since IRCA, it has been argued that undocumented migrants earn substantially lower wages than legal immigrants from the same Mexican communities (Donato et al., 1992). Moreover, working conditions may be particularly harsh for undocumented immigrants since employers may perceive these workers to be easily exploitable as a result of their vulnerability to arrest and deportation (Cornelius, 1983; Portes and Bach, 1985).

Despite this generally negative working environment, 80 per cent of all migrants aged 16 and above from migrant households in my study sites had paid employment whilst in the US. For legal and undocumented migrants, the corresponding figures are 76 per cent and 81 per cent respectively. Fifty five per cent of female, and 95 per cent of male migrants aged 16 and over worked outside the household for at least part of their time in the US. This reiterates my contention of the previous chapter that many female migrants effectively become labour migrants in the US by taking on paid work, regardless of their original motivation for migration.

2 Although there is a wide-ranging debate in the literature as to what the effects of IRCA have been, there does seem to be a general consensus that it has not acted as a strong deterrent to undocumented migration from Mexico. (For discussion of the impacts of IRCA, see Bean et al., 1990c; Cornelius, 1991; Massey et al., 1990.)

7.2.2 Short-term and longer-term migrants

I have argued thus far that short-term and longer-term migrants represent two distinct migration flows. In this section I suggest that the migrants who constitute these flows are characterised by different migrant experiences. Table 7.3 compares the economic activities of these two categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity status</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid work</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities of short-term and longer-term migrants could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

Looking at the activities of the two types of migrants while in the US, it is apparent from Table 7.3 that while the vast majority of longer-term migrants were employed, only half the short-term migrants had paid work outside the home while in the US. This latter is partly due to the relatively high proportion of students among the short-term group, which in turn reflects the relatively high percentage of children - 24 per cent of the short-term group were children under the age of 16, compared with nine per cent of the longer-term migrant group, although the difference is not statistically significant (see Table 7.8). Nevertheless, even when only those migrants aged 16 and above, who may be regarded as being of working age, are considered, a far higher percentage of longer-term migrants (90 per cent) worked outside the home compared with short-term migrants (68 per cent). The difference can be explained partly by the larger fraction of short-term migrants who were full-time homemakers in the US. Since all of these homemakers were women, this also suggests greater preservation of traditional Mexican family norms concerning the stay-at-home housewife by this group.
Tables 7.4 and 7.5 show the activities of short-term and longer-term migrants disaggregated by sex. The proportion of women who are full-time homemakers is clearly greater among the short-term migrants than the longer-term migrants, more than half of whom are employed outside the home. The majority of male migrants in both groups have paid work, but again, the percentage is highest for the longer-term migrants.

Table 7.4 A comparison of the economic activity status of female short-term and longer-term migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity status</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid work</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=16 n=11

The activities of female short-term and longer-term migrants could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

Table 7.5 A comparison of the economic activity status of male short-term and longer-term migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity status</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid work</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=18 n=23

The activities of male short-term and longer-term migrants could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

The larger proportion of children (and students) in the short-term group, which it should be remembered is composed of return migrants who spent two years or less in the US, also strengthens the argument that the return migration flow includes instances of family migration. Although the proportion of children amongst the longer-term migrants is lower, this does not mean that this flow does not involve family migration. Households which have moved to the US in their entirety and remained there, leaving no member of the household in Mexico to record their absence are by definition excluded from the survey,
which may have led to a considerable degree of under-recording of whole-household migration. The point I want to stress here however is that family or household migration is not exclusively permanent, as may be inferred from some of the literature (e.g. Chávez, 1988), and the identification of family migration in the short-term return migration flow is evidence of this.

Looking at the sectors in which migrants are employed (see Table 7.6), the employment profile of longer-term migrants can be seen to reflect the recent concentration of immigrant workers in the manufacturing and service sectors (Muller, 1992; Sassen, 1988). The service sector can also be seen from Table 7.6 to be an important source of jobs for short-term migrants, but the manufacturing sector is relatively unimportant compared with agriculture. The large demand for low-wage workers in the areas of manufacturing and services has been explained by the effects of the process of internationalisation of production on the US economy. This has been commonly used to designate the development of off-shore manufacturing and clerical sectors, but it also involves the development of major US cities as centres for global management and servicing and the growth of foreign investment in manufacturing, finance and related services in the US (Sassen, 1988).

These structural changes are commonly perceived to be associated with a growth in high-technology industry and skilled jobs requiring education and training (Muller, 1992). A substantial share of new jobs remain however in low-wage, low-skill categories (ibid.). This is due to the decline in unionised production jobs, the growth of small-batch, often craft-based manufacturing, and a massive increase in low-wage service jobs: these general trends have been described as forming part of an overall process of casualisation (Sassen and Smith, 1992).
Table 7.6 Employment sectors of working migrants in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector of employment</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=17 n=24

The employment sectors of short-term and longer-term migrants could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

It appears that the employment profile of longer-term migrants is shifting in response to the changing division of labour in the US economy, while that of short-term migrants is remaining more ‘traditional’. The majority of the short-term migrants from the study sites spent their time in the US working in jobs in the fields, in construction, or in restaurants and hotels. This may reflect the fact that a higher proportion of short-term migrants were undocumented (see Table 7.2), and hence more likely to be shunted into the least desirable jobs. There is no significant difference between the two groups of migrants in terms of sex or age (see Tables 7.7 and 7.8), both factors which could influence the nature of their incorporation to the labour market.

Table 7.7 Sex of short-term and longer-term migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=34 n=35

χ² = 1.167 with 1 degree of freedom

H₀: There is no significant difference between the sex of short-term and long-term migrants.
Table 7.8 Age of short-term and longer-term migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 16 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and over</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=33  n=34

χ² = 2.901 with 1 degree of freedom  
H₀: There is no significant difference between the age structure of short-term and longer-term migrants.

The mean age of short-term migrants was 26 years, that of longer-term migrants 24 years. A comparison of these mean ages using the t-test confirmed that this difference was not statistically significant.

A significant difference is however evident between the two groups in terms of their educational level (see Table 7.9). More than half the longer-term migrants had education beyond the primary level, compared with less than a third of the short-term migrants. The average number of years of education of short-term migrants was 6.4, compared with 8.1 for the longer-term migrants. This difference is statistically significant when the mean figures are compared using the t-test.

Table 7.9 Educational status of short-term and longer-term migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No education, incomplete primary or primary (0-6 years)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than primary (7+ years)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=28  n=31

χ² = 5.192 with 1 degree of freedom  
H₁: There is a significant difference between short-term migrants and longer-term migrants in terms of their educational level.

There are also some observable differences between short- and longer-term migrants in terms of their motivations for migration, although these differences are not significant (see Table 7.10).
Table 7.10 A comparison of the motivations of migration of short-term and longer-term migrants aged 16+

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Short-term migrants (%)</th>
<th>Longer-term migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work/economic</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=25</td>
<td>n=24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 3.030 with 2 degrees of freedom
H₀: There is no significant difference between the motivations of short-term and longer-term migrants.

Although I have already discussed the difficulty of evaluating motivations for migration and return, the importance of adventure for longer-term migrants is notable. This is a surprising result, since adventure is generally more evocative of a relatively short-term trip. As I argued in Chapter Six however, migrating for adventure does not mean that migrants do not take up paid employment, and hence it is perfectly plausible that such migrants extend their trips into more settled forms of migration. Although logically it may be expected that trips made out of a quest for adventure would be shorter than those made for other reasons, this is not the case and the close association of migration for adventure with longer-term migrants may not be accidental.

The category 'adventure', as I discussed earlier, includes those people who migrated out of a curiosity to see the US, or out of a desire for a new experience, including working in a different economic and social environment. It may be that such people are more open to new experiences, because of their specific desire for them, and hence more likely to adapt to life in the US to such a degree that their 'adventure trip' becomes a more settled immigration. They may have a predisposition towards US society based on secondary knowledge, which through direct experience is translated into a propensity for relatively long-term settlement. Hence, those who migrate as part of a search for novelty of experience are perhaps those most likely to want to prolong this novelty. Conversely, migration motivated by adventure may reflect a high degree of dissatisfaction with the sending society, which in turn favours a longer stay in the US, because of the lack of incentive to return home. This was so, for example, for Violeta (see page 163), a single
mother whose long-term settlement in the US was (partly) attributed by her mother to the difficulty of her life in Mexico.

To reiterate, longer-term migrants are more likely than short-term migrants to have legal documents, generally have a higher level of education and tend to be concentrated in the manufacturing and service sectors. Their migrations are twice as likely as those of short-term migrants to have been motivated by adventure. Short-term migrants are less likely to have paid employment, and when they do, work mainly in the agricultural and service sectors. It seems that more settled migrants are positively selected in terms of the characteristics which enable them to secure a (marginally) better niche in the labour market. Hence it would appear that the legal status and educational level of a migrant do interact to influence the type of job which is likely to be obtained, which in turn influences the length of time which the migrant is likely to stay in the US.

7.2.3 Gender and the US labour market

In the US labour market as a whole, the service sector employs a greater proportion of the total female labour force than it does of the male (González, 1989). Immigrant women, particularly those who originate from countries other than those of North America or Europe, have also generally found employment more often than immigrant men in the service economy (Boyd, 1996). For the migrants recorded in my survey however, there was no significant difference between the sectors of employment of male and female immigrants, with services and manufacturing between them accounting for the vast majority of jobs (See Table 7.11). The agricultural sector appears to be relatively unimportant overall. This mirrors both the increasingly urban nature of migrant destinations (Bustamante, 1994; Cornelius et al., 1982; López, 1990; Portes and Rumbaut, 1990; Vernez and Ronfeldt, 1991) and the re-structuring of the US labour market referred to above.
Table 7.11 Sector of employment of working immigrants in the US by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector of employment</th>
<th>Female migrants (%)</th>
<th>Male migrants (%)</th>
<th>All migrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=10  n=38  n=48

The employment sector of male and female migrants could not be compared using the chi-square test since more than a fifth of the expected values were less than five, thus not fulfilling the conditions of the test.

In the context of a labour market with a tendency to discriminate against immigrant workers in general, women are susceptible to further exploitation on the basis of their gender. It has been argued that immigrant women working in the US suffer a triple oppression as a result of the combination of their gender, their class, and their nationality (Mora and del Castillo, 1980; Vogel, 1989; Yung, 1995).

Simultaneously members of several oppressed groups - females, historically subordinated racial-ethnics and the poor or working-class - [their] distinct set of social locations intersect in ways which shape their life chances and perceptions of opportunity. (Segura, 1994:36)

The effect that gender has on labour market participation is due to the interaction of factors operating at the individual, household, labour market and societal levels. Legal status and education are important, as demonstrated above. The economic incorporation of women immigrants owes much to the demand for female immigrant workers as a source of cheap and flexible labour (Sassen, 1984), but also reflects US society’s portrayal of appropriate jobs for women. These influences are overlain by cultural expectations and values held by female immigrants and by other members of their family and/or household. It has been suggested that because Mexican families tend to be mother-centred, with women responsible for the majority of household and child-care tasks, women’s chances for mobility in paid employment are constrained by their household obligations (Segura, 1994). This is the case in both Mexico and the US.
Women are appreciated more there, and they get more support. They get treated worse here. But it's difficult for them to find work in both countries because of the problem of finding someone good to look after the children. You can work in a house and you can have more flexible working hours but it's hard to find that sort of work.  
(Nancy, see page 181)

It may be argued that migration to the US permits a renegotiation of women's household obligations. Yet Denise Segura goes on to suggest that Mexican and chicana women are often reluctant to challenge traditional ideologies of gender that may affect their employment options because they perceive them as an affirmation of both their cultural and ethnic background and their womanhood.

Despite the fact that they occupy a subordinate position in the US labour market, a high proportion of female Mexican immigrants do participate in paid work outside the home (Segura, 1994; Vogel, 1989), even if they had not done so before their migration (Chaney, 1982; González, 1989). As mentioned above, 55 per cent of all adult female migrants recorded in the research project participated in the US labour market. This figure rises to 64 per cent of longer-term female migrants, although it falls to 25 per cent for short-term women migrants, again illustrating the different nature of these two migration flows.

There is a widespread belief in both Mexico and the US that the majority of Mexican women in the US who have paid work are employed as domestics. Indeed, female labour migrants may often be seen as synonymous with domestic workers. The domestic work performed by female immigrants, both in the US context and elsewhere, also has a high profile in the literature. It has been argued that the reality of the working mother and the diminishing role of the state in the care of the very young and the elderly has resulted in an enormously increased demand for domestic workers in affluent societies (Phizacklea, 1996). Yet relatively few female migrants identified in the study communities worked or had worked as domestics or nannies in the US. Similarly, research by Rita Simon and Margot DeLey in Los Angeles county (1984) found that less than 10 per cent of undocumented Mexican women immigrants interviewed worked in domestic service.

4 Nancy's comment is in line with the work of Mary Romero (1992, 1994) on domestic workers in El Paso, in which she argues that they are increasingly negotiating the terms of their employment on an employer-employee rather than mistress-maid basis. As the extract from Nancy's interview also implies however, it is not always easy to find employers who are willing to enter such negotiations.
It may be that the extent of domestic work was under-recorded in both my project and that of Simon and DeLey because of a reluctance on the part of respondents to admit to what is often regarded as a low-status job. Thus the actual significance of domestic employment for Mexican women immigrants may be greater than these figures suggest. Certainly, a commonly held view expressed by both migrants and non-migrants during my research was that such work was widely available in the US, and moreover that it was exclusively female. In fact it was often perceived as being easier for female migrants than male migrants to secure paid employment, precisely because of the demand for Mexican women as domestics. Whereas in relation to themselves or their family people may have been unwilling to talk about domestic work, in general terms there seemed to be no perception that jobs in domestic service were not widely taken up by Mexican women in the US.

It's easier for women to get work there because they can work in houses and look after children.
(Marta, a 66 year-old mother of nine. She has two daughters and a son living in Los Angeles, and she and her husband made an extended visit to them two years previously.)

The assumption that domestic service is the domain of women is predicated partially on the idea that employers in the US are more disposed to trust women with the care of their children and houses than they are men.

It's easier for them [women] to get jobs because Americans can have more confidence in them looking after children and houses. Men, no.
(Susana, see page 161)

It is true that male migrants are often perceived as vagrants and potential criminals by the white, middle-class community in the US (Bustamante, 1993), despite evidence to suggest that immigrants are more likely to be the victims than the perpetrators of crime (Wolf, 1988). But the widespread persistence of the association of women migrants in paid employment with domestic servants is also rooted in the beliefs on both sides of the border about what constitutes 'women's work'. Domestic service may be conceptualised as an extension of the reproductive work that many women carry out in their own home, involving similar tasks, and oriented towards the maintenance of the family, even though in the case of domestic employment the family is that of the employer.

Because domestic work takes place within a private house, and not in the public sphere of, for example, factory work, it may be accepted as posing no threat to the 'natural' order
of things, in which women move in the (male-regulated) private sphere of the home, men in the public sphere of work. Since many female-dominated jobs, but particularly domestic service, involve helping or serving others, women in these jobs often reinforce social conceptualisations of femininity (Segura, 1994). In this way, women may circumvent male opposition to their working outside the home. At the same time, however, allowing domestic service to be defined as an expansion of women's reproductive role downgrades the status of domestic service as a real job.

US Census figures show that although the percentage of women employed in domestic work declined from 28.7 per cent in 1900 to 5.1 per cent in 1970, _latinlas_ are the largest category of women entering this occupation (Romero, 1992:71). Hence while domestic service has declined in importance relative to other sex-segregated occupations which dominate women's work in the labour force, and a perception has consequently developed that this occupation is vanishing, this is not the case amongst Hispanic women. Recent research with _chicana_ household workers in El Paso confirms this (Romero, 1994). The women interviewed for this study did not complain about the difficulty of finding a job as a domestic worker, but of the difficulty in finding employment outside the dead-end, low-status and low-paying market of household labour and childcare (ibid.). This contradicts the notion that it is common for immigrant women to go into domestic service as their first job in the US, perhaps before moving on to other types of work (Solarzano-Torres, 1987).

While the employment of immigrant women as domestics is not disappearing then, it has been suggested that the nature of domestic service work is changing, with a decline in live-in employees and a rise in daily help (Romero, 1992). In border zones, Mexican women commute daily across the border to work as domestics in the US, either on tourist visas, or with _la migra_ turning a blind eye when they recognise that these women are not potential long-term immigrants (see Halsell, 1978; Ranney and Kossoudji, 1983). Several respondents confirmed this phenomenon of women commuting across the border to work as domestics by referring to the activities of friends and relatives living close to the border, particularly in Tijuana.

Housework, or domestic labour, is ascribed on the basis of gender, but as noted above it may also reflect a racial division of reproductive labour. Thus, privileged women of one
class and 'race' use the labour of a woman of a different 'race' and class to escape some of the constraints of the gender division of labour (Glenn, 1992; Romero, 1992). This accounts for the historical availability of domestic service work for female immigrants. In the US today, (undocumented) Mexican immigrant women tend to predominate amongst domestic workers in large cities and along the border, and although the average wages for all undocumented migrants are well below the minimum, domestic workers are paid the least (Romero, 1992). Domestic work may have undergone significant changes, but race relations remain at the centre of the occupation, which has traditionally been and currently remains dominated by non-white women (Romero, 1994).

Domestic workers are hired on the basis of a private contract between themselves and their employer, and because the work takes place in such an individual and disaggregated fashion, there is little chance for such workers to come together to campaign for their rights. Most domestic service workers are in fact 'invisible' in the labour market, and, it may be argued, in the house in which they carry out their work. Hence, there are no official guidelines to the rights of those employed in domestic service, which inevitably means that many work long hours for low pay, with no formal delimitation of the duties they are expected to perform. Having said this, not all employers of domestic servants are necessarily exploitative and demanding of hard labour and long hours, as the following quote from Juana indicates.

I liked it very much there, and would like to live there, but only if all my family were there too. When I was living in my employer's house, the señora never ordered me to do anything. I didn't have to cook or do the washing, basically just keep the house clean. I liked working there; I've never worked in Mexico.

(Juana, see page 125)

Moreover, while the 'invisibility' of domestic workers as a group may be detrimental to their labour rights and rates of pay, it may be an advantage for individual undocumented workers. The possibility for exploitation under threat of being reported to the immigration authorities exists, as it does in any other sphere of employment. The invisible nature of the work may however actively reduce other possibilities of being noticed by the INS, especially if the job is a live-in position. For this reason, the idea of domestic work may be attractive to illegal female immigrants.
It's easier for women to get work there, and if they're lucky they can get a job in a private house so they don't have to go out as much and they avoid the danger of la migra. My daughter's working in a factory, but she'd prefer to work in a house if she could. (Conchita, see page 146)

Some of the disadvantages of a domestic position - isolation, confinement, loneliness, fear of deportation - are common to the undocumented migrant whatever their employment (Melville, 1978), but for domestic workers these negative aspects may be offset to some extent by the greater degree of protection offered by the invisible nature of the job. This is not of course to claim that life as an undocumented migrant working as a domestic is ideal, or to condone the low wages generally paid, and the high demands often made. The point to be made is the interaction which exists for the domestic worker between gender, 'race', and legal status. The 'invisibility' of the domestic worker may have contradictory effects because of this interaction. On the one hand, it may perpetuate exploitation, but on the other it may help conceal undocumented status. It has been suggested that the possibility of finding employment in invisible occupations such as domestic service makes it easier for undocumented female immigrants to find work than undocumented males (Bean, Espenshade et al., 1990), and this was certainly a common belief amongst respondents in the study communities, as was shown by the comments of Marta and Susana.

Thus while domestic service undeniably remains important for many Mexican immigrant women and chicanas, perhaps more so than it would appear from some of the statistics available, including those based on my own research, manufacturing is also becoming an increasingly significant employer of female immigrants (Sassen, 1984; Simon and DeLey, 1984). Saskia Sassen (1988) estimates that around one third of all immigrant women are employed in manufacturing. Monica Boyd (1996) suggests that foreign-born women in the US (and in Canada) are employed in consumer service industries and in manufacturing generally, and are also employed disproportionately in textile and clothing industries, in electronics manufacturing, and in personal services. She goes on to argue that:

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5 There are contrasting opinions on this point of undocumented status in relation to finding employment. Sherrie Kossoudji and Susan Ranney (1984), for example, claim that lack of legal status is more constraining for women than men in the search for work.
these industries represent low-skill/low-pay service sector jobs in consumer services and jobs in old manufacturing industries vulnerable to restructuring as a result of offshore production. (Boyd, 1996:205)

Hispanic immigrants in general have a higher participation in manufacturing than other ethnic groups (Muller, 1992) and it has been suggested that Mexican-origin women are more likely than either black or white women to work in manufacturing (González, 1989). Table 7.9 indicates that 40 per cent of employed female migrants in the survey worked in manufacturing. The shift of female immigrant workers into the manufacturing sector is related to the processes of economic re-structuring and casualisation discussed above. It is also linked to the increasing employment of women in export manufacturing in migrants' countries of origin, which may initiate the patterns of female industrial employment (Sassen, 1984)^.

Just as immigrant women are seen to be moving into 'non-traditional' areas of manufacturing, which are then being reclassified as female-typed jobs, immigrant men are also diversifying from the 'usual' male migrant jobs of agriculture and construction into service work. In a study of Hispanic workers in the garment and restaurant industries in Los Angeles County, for example, Maram et al. (1980) found that most employees were undocumented Mexican immigrants, and that in the garment industry, a majority of the workers were female, while in the restaurant industry, male workers prevailed. The majority of male immigrants in the survey were also seen to be employed in service work (see Table 7.9).

This was perceived by some respondents in the study sites as an employment of men in 'women's work', because of the close association that has conventionally been made between the provision of services and female employment.

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6 See Patricia Fernández-Kelly (1983a) and Ruth Pearson (1991) for discussion of the participation of Mexican women in maquiladora employment.
It's easier for women to get work, in factories and *costuras*\(^7\), and in general, in 'women's work'. My husband does women's work, because he's in a hotel.

(Bárbara, a 48 year-old mother of seven, whose husband and son were in Colorado at the time of the survey, working in an hotel.)

Men are seen as having to move into 'women's work' because of the general lack of employment opportunities in the US, and the wider availability of service work compared with other jobs. There has thus been a 'masculinisation' of some so-called feminine activities, related to the dynamics of the economy (García, 1985). The occupational shifts of male immigrant workers are also identified with a forced reassessment of their social role, in particular a lessening of male arrogance and *machismo*.

They don't like Mexicans there and the labour market is saturated so it's very difficult to find work ... But it's easier for women because they're brave, and they learn quickly and work hard. Here the men are really *macho*, but not so much there where they have to wash dishes.

(Inés, see page 143)

In taking on such work, men are thus likely to perceive themselves as undergoing a drop in status relative to their occupational position in Mexico, whereas immigrant women may experience a rise in status and self-esteem through their participation in the US labour market, especially if they have not worked outside the household before (Baca and Bryan, 1985; Guendelman, 1987; Guendelman and Pérez-Itriago, 1987). While the form which employment takes may cause some men to reconsider their self-image, others may be immune to such change because of the attitude which they adopt towards their work in the US. If the idea of return is nurtured, migrants may retain the status which they have in their home community, regarding the migration as a transitional phase of no importance to their 'real' social standing and identity which is grounded in the home community (Piore, 1979).

The Mexicans don't care, they're just there to make a bit of money. Their life is in Mexico, their status ...

(Pancho, see page 169)

This ability to regard jobs as asocial while they can be seen as temporary has been used to explain why, when women have achieved a (perceived) rise in status and/or general circumstance and opportunity through migration, men are often more keen than their female counterparts to return (Pessar, 1985,1988).

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\(^{7}\) Clothing factories or work-shops.
In this section I have argued that a majority of adult immigrants in the US have paid employment. Immigrant workers tend to be concentrated at the lower end of the occupational scale, with women likely to hold the lowest positions. This means that they are not generally in direct competition for jobs with native workers. The specific disadvantage of female immigrants in the labour market reflects the gender division of labour both within the household and outside it, and results from the combination of their sex, their ‘race’, their class, and their immigrant status. The role of these variables in delineating the occupational identity of women is most evident in the case of domestic workers.

Undocumented immigrants as a whole tend to work in the more ‘traditional’ immigrant sectors of the labour market, and I have argued here that lack of legal status is linked not only to lower pay and insecurity, but also, and partly as a function of these other factors, to a tendency to remain in the US for a shorter time period. Looking at this from a slightly different perspective, I have also identified a significant difference in the labour market behaviour of short-term migrants and longer-term immigrants: a smaller percentage of the former group has paid employment. This is linked to legal status. A larger proportion of this group lacks documents, which may limit access to jobs and increase insecurity. It is also related to the family migration component of this group. There are more students and full-time homemakers amongst the short-term migrants than in the longer-term group, and the fact that fewer female migrants in the short-term group have paid work suggests a stronger adherence to traditional cultural norms and roles. In the following section I explore the potential cultural transformations that migrant women may undergo through the migration process, bearing in mind the conditioning effects of such factors as undocumented status.

7.3 Women immigrants and empowerment in the US

Migration may be portrayed as a chance for women to improve their situation, both economically and socially, based on the premise that receiving communities offer a wider range of opportunities (Morokvašic, 1983; Tienda and Booth, 1991). From this standpoint the main ways of realising this improvement are through employment and the assimilation of the norms and practices of ‘developed world’ society. This conception, however, has
three major draw-backs. Firstly, the assumption that employment is invariably a positive experience for migrant women is not necessarily well-founded. Secondly, even if it is accepted that employment in the receiving society leads to empowerment, not all female immigrants 'work', and so are excluded from this avenue of so-called liberation. And thirdly, the privileged placing of 'developed world' culture as superior to 'developing world' culture is an ethnocentric presumption which can be contested.

7.3.1 Female immigrants and employment

Here I evaluate the extent to which paid employment for women immigrants can be linked with a rise in self-esteem and in status and influence in the eyes of other household members and society. This connection between employment and social constructions and perceptions illustrates that the economic cannot always be separated from the social. In other words, the two factors which are described as roads to liberation for migrant women - employment and culture - are not always easily separable. The experience of employment and earning an independent wage outside the home, especially if these are new experiences for her, may be positive for a female immigrant. Several studies report that immigrant women gain a sense of self-satisfaction through making a recognisable financial contribution to the household budget (Chaney, 1982; Guendelman and Perez-Itriago, 1987). Some women may not have had a formal job in Mexico but generated income through informal activities, such as taking in ironing or selling fruit and sweets from their home. Their efforts in these pursuits were often not acknowledged as representing 'real' work, either by themselves or by other members of their household, whereas participation in the US labour market is more often recognised as a real contribution, both by the women themselves and by others. There may thus be a link between the recognition of women's paid work and the degree of its 'formality'; it is easier to construct informal activities, particularly those performed in the household, as extensions of a woman's domestic work, and therefore as an acceptable and 'normal' household duty.
I liked working there. Here I don’t have a job, I just sometimes help my husband. We lived better economically there, because I earned money as well ... I did the housework there, but there was less to do. Really I work more here and I don’t have a job. Well, I haven’t got a washing machine. I’d like to go back there ... My husband is trying to arrange the papers, but maybe only for himself this time.

(Angela spent a year in California where she worked in a hotel. She migrated with her children to join her husband who had left two years earlier with a friend. He worked as a driver. She is 32 years old and has two children. Her husband bakes bread and sells it in the local area from a mobile stall.)

For women who are part of an immigrant household in the US, taking on paid employment can represent a role expansion, and may effectively ‘buy’ the woman a greater say in household decisions previously taken by her husband alone. The marital relationship may thus become more egalitarian (Guendelman, 1987; Guendelman and Perez-Itriago, 1987) and the woman may also have a greater sense of personal freedom (Chaney, 1982). As mentioned earlier, 55 per cent of migrant women had paid work whilst in the US. But there is no guarantee that participation in the labour market will decrease intra-household inequalities in other aspects such as decision-making: the connection between earning money and increasing influence in the household is not always made (see Hubbell, 1993; Tienda and Booth, 1991).

Angela particularly relished the opportunity to contribute to the household budget because although in Mexico she often works with her husband, who is self-employed, neither look upon this as her ‘job’. Yet she continues to defer to her husband in major decision-making matters, and even though she is keen to return to the US, she is prepared to accept that her husband may decide to go alone. Hence Angela’s migration, even though it involved her entry into paid employment, has not brought about any fundamental change in the power relations existing between her and her husband.

An immigrant woman’s participation in paid employment is not generally accompanied by a decrease in the amount of domestic work she is expected to do in the household. While her role in the public sphere of work may have expanded, there is little evidence of any concomitant reduction in the demands on her labour in the household, except occasionally in cases where there has been a long period of spousal separation through family stage-
migration (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). This leads to the classic double day of work, with working women still taking primary responsibility for all or most household tasks (Melville, 1978; Moser, 1987; Pessar, 1985). The demands of the workload may be exacerbated for women who previously shared household labour with other members of an extended household, and who after migration as part of a nuclear household find themselves solely responsible for domestic labour and childcare. On the other hand, as implied by Angela, the overall burden of domestic labour may be reduced for some women by greater access to domestic appliances.

The degree to which employment brings about the empowerment of female migrants varies. The experiences of a young, single, independent migrant and an older, married woman accompanied by her family are likely to be very different, even if both have paid work (see for example Baca and Bryan, 1985; Tienda and Booth, 1991). The transformations effected (or not) in intra-household decision-making patterns and the division of household labour depend as much on the personal relations and values of the household members as on whether or not an immigrant woman participates in the US labour market. In other words, the effects of employment are differentiated.

Furthermore, if a woman previously participated in the Mexican labour market, there may be no real change in her activities, self-esteem or influence in the household upon migration to the US. Female participation in the Mexican labour market is increasingly becoming the norm, especially for younger women, hence this ‘no-change’ scenario is likely to become more common in the future. It is therefore not enough to state that employment is liberating for immigrant women. The circumstances of such women, including the nature of their household relations as well as their pre- and post-migration interaction with the labour market, need to be evaluated individually rather than generally. In addition, a conceptual focus on the emancipatory effects of paid employment in the host society, envisages ‘work’ as an element of modernity, non-existent as a norm or as a behaviour before migration from a ‘traditional’ society (Morokvašić, 1983). Waged work

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8 This is where one or more family members migrate first, and other members join them at a later date, usually when the first migrant(s) is/are economically established.
is then (mis)represented as a gift of 'developed' societies to women of the 'developing world' and a solution to their struggle against their oppressive traditions (ibid.)

Even if women gain economically from their participation in paid work, it has been argued that these gains have been enabled by a larger economic process which institutionalises their oppression (Chapin, 1989). To expand, although 'working' women may be financially better off, they have had to earn this money in a labour market that discriminates against them on the basis of their sex. This is not applicable only to immigrant women, of course, although they may be further disadvantaged because of their 'race'. It has been claimed that:

immigrant women who are recent arrivals [in North America] and/or from areas other than North America or Europe are most likely to be employed in low-wage, low-skill jobs in sectors of falling employment. (Boyd, 1996:193)

Combined with lack of legal status, oppression and confinement may have a substantial impact on day-to-day living. Several return migrants complained that they felt life in the US left little possibility for anything other than work, especially when the restrictions were compounded by an inability to speak English.

I didn’t like the feeling of being trapped - I didn’t have any papers, and I didn’t know the language. It’s very different there, pure work and no entertainment or enjoyment ... And more recently the problem of discrimination has been increasing.

(Estella, a 29 year-old married woman with three children. She spent six months in California with her husband just after they were married - he had paid work but she did not. Her husband has continued to migrate to the US for several months at a time, and at the time I spoke with Estella, he was working in a tomato cannery in California.)

Legal status is therefore a further factor which conditions the immigrant experience and differentiates amongst women (and men). Not only may legal migrants have easier access to a wider range of jobs, but the nature of non-working life is also affected by the possession or lack of documents.

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9 Early studies of migrant women in several different contexts adopted this approach. See for example Abadan-Unat, 1977; Castles and Kosack, 1973; Foner, 1979.
Here you can go out alone, or with someone else, walking. There you can't because of *la migra*. It [the US] has lots of nice places, it's just a shame you can't go to them more freely. I was only there to visit, but I didn't like it. There's a lot of discrimination against Mexicans. They don't have the liberty to go out without fear of *la migra*.

(Marta, see page 206)

Employment itself may be a degrading experience. It has been remarked above that immigrant working conditions are exploitative, and that immigrant women are generally the most exploited workers as a result of the interaction between their gender, 'race' and immigrant status. Manufacturing work can be repetitive and dangerous and the potential for over-work and underpayment in the unregulated sphere of domestic service work has been discussed above. Here Augusta describes the oppressive boredom of most unskilled manufacturing jobs.

It's difficult there, it's not always as easy as people think. I did have a job, I got it through a contact, but it was very hard work. You didn't get any breaks. It was very monotonous. The same thing again and again ... It was harder work there than here, you have to work eight hours a day. Here it's not as hard and it's less formal, if you want to take a break you just do.

(Augusta, a 32 year-old mother of five. She lived in Los Angeles for two years before she was married and one of her sisters is living there now.)

Several respondents commented on the formality and discipline of working in the US as compared to Mexico. Wages in the US may be higher, but working conditions were generally thought to be more rigid and inflexible, less accommodating than in Mexico. This opinion was particularly pronounced amongst those people who had worked in typical 'immigrant' jobs, where employers are more likely to allow exploitative practices. On the other hand, some people commented on the greater possibilities for on-the-job training in the US relative to Mexico.

They teach you how to do the work if you don't already know, and the jobs are more secure. There's more specialisation, for example in clothes manufacture, every worker does one particular part, and they teach you how to do it, how to use the machines.

(Lupe, a 64 year-old widow with six children. She is retired but sells perfume on a commission basis from her home. Her daughter lives in Utah and works in a garment factory.)

It appears that the perception of working conditions in the US is influenced not just by the migrant experience of the labour market - although this is important, and working conditions undoubtedly vary between sectors and from job to job - but also by previous jobs held in Mexico. For women who had not previously had formal employment,
working in the US may seem more progressive than to those who had been self-employed or who had worked in a more skilled job before their migration. This underlines the need for acknowledging differentiation between (women) migrants and their individual socio-cultural and economic backgrounds rather than attempting to impose a linear relationship on the interaction between employment and empowerment.

7.3.2 Immigrant women without paid work

Not all immigrant women have paid work outside the household. Forty five per cent of all adult female migrants included in the survey did not have paid work outside the home whilst in the US. If employment is the liberating force for women in US society, then logically, ‘non-working’ immigrant women are deprived of its advantages. Lack of employment also often means operating in a more limited social context, with less exposure to the ‘developed world’ values which are deemed potentially transformative in this framework, and also more restricted opportunities to build social networks outside the household. It has also been argued that the united immigrant family in the US actually reduces opportunities for female empowerment: whereas male migrant absence gives female stay-at-homes a chance of autonomy and role expansion, whole family residence in a ‘modern’ country ironically permits the re-establishment of the traditional Mexican family (González de la Rocha, 1993).

Lots of people go [to the US] and leave their families here, which is bad. But those who take their family with them often live just the same there as they did here, except they can progress economically. The family doesn’t change. It’s good for them to earn more money there [in the US], but everyone should have the right to progress in their own country.

(Antonia, a 36 year-old married woman with seven children. She has two brothers and two sisters in the US.)

Previous work has suggested that immigrant women who do not have work outside the home may suffer their own specific set of problems. They can feel an acute sense of loneliness, with the stress of separation from extended family and familiar surroundings unalleviated by social contacts at work (Melville, 1978). Failure to enter the US labour market results in a loss of autonomy for many migrant women, forcing an increased dependence on their husbands and relatives, not just economically, but also in fulfilling their traditional female duties, such as shopping, because of a lack of language skills or mobility (Guendelman, 1987; Melville, 1978). Such role restriction causes many women
to feel inadequate. These feelings can be intensified because of modern household appliances that may reduce the amount of time spent on household tasks\textsuperscript{10}. This can produce a decrease in migrant women's feelings of usefulness, and leave them with more free time than they can occupy, given the additional restrictions they may suffer due to lack of transport or communications skills. Many women are left feeling stifled and bored. The experience of such problems means that these women come to view their migration as mainly negative. This was certainly so for Laura, who sums up the impressions of several return migrant women.

I felt trapped there. Everyone else worked and I was left in the house alone. My aunt and uncle had a car, but I can't drive, so I could only go out when they were around ... I couldn't find a decent job ... I had much less work there in the house too. In fact I was bored and had nothing to do. Everything was carpeted and so there was nothing to do, except to vacuum once a week. All I did was prepare food and sleep. I like it better in Mexico.

(Laura, a 26 year-old mother of a baby daughter. She and her husband lived in California for a year two and a half years before the interview. Her husband was working as a nurse there, but she didn't have paid employment, nor does she now.)

7.3.3 West is best?

The belief that living in a 'developed world' society (still often described as 'the West', despite the increasing geographical inaccuracy of this term) is necessarily advantageous to women from the 'developing world' is an ethnocentric one. It is based on the imperialist supposition that the 'modern' values of the 'developed world' are superior to the 'traditional' ones of the 'developing world'. The implicit expectation in this context is that a move into a 'developed' and modernised country is automatically accompanied by a move towards egalitarian status between immigrant men and women (Morokvasic, 1984). As shown above, while a tendency towards more co-operative marital roles may

\textsuperscript{10} The counterpoint to this line of reasoning is that modern household appliances do not in fact decrease the time needed to complete household labour. Instead, the 'necessary' household tasks expand to fill the time available to a full-time homemaker. The same range of tasks are perceived to be necessary by women who also work outside the home, so that the double day for working women does not disappear with the introduction of household appliances. For a discussion of this viewpoint, see Cowan (1989). Not all women necessarily perceive the same range of tasks as indispensable, however. Hence immigrant women accustomed to performing a certain range of tasks in different (and often more difficult) circumstances may find that they save time in completing these same tasks with the aid of household appliances and in houses of a different design.
emerge from female employment, equality in time spent on household tasks is not achieved, nor is this generally the case in the host society at large (e.g. Hartmann, 1987).

Neither 'developed world' women nor 'developing world' women can be treated as homogenous groups, yet despite this, and despite the fact that many women in the 'developed world' do not have equality with men, the bi-polar comparison between 'developed world' women as secular, liberated and with control over their own lives, and 'developing world' women as oppressed and lacking in autonomous control, continues to be made (Goetz, 1991; Mohanty, 1988). Use of the term 'traditional' becomes a substitute for analysis of migrant women's specific socio-cultural background (Morokvasic, 1984). In the same way 'modern' comes to denote equality between men and women, progressive society, 'development' and, implicitly, superiority. The assumption is 'that Western women are truly emancipated from patriarchal shackles' (Udayagiri, 1995:161).

While immigrant women may favour some aspects of US society, they dislike others precisely because of their contradictory relation to Mexican culture, which they wish to uphold. In other words, women as well as men value the traditions and customs of their homeland and often maintain and celebrate them through choice, not because they are forced to through their inability to resist impenetrable 'developing world' patriarchy. Hence portraying immigrant women as passive and subjugated victims, who, on exposure to liberated 'developed world' culture are presented with the chance to 'free themselves' overlooks the many complexities involved in adapting to life as a migrant.

Portraying the 'developed world' as the only location within which to realise goals of employment and autonomy for women denies moreover the opportunities to fulfil such goals that exist in the 'developing world'. Mexican women frequently work outside the home, and through this work, may gain access to similar advantages, economic and otherwise, to those that have been identified above for some immigrant women in the US. The increasing participation of women in paid employment outside the home in Mexico is widely recognised, and is generally perceived as progressive. In addition, research has identified a trend, particularly amongst younger Mexican women, to have greater economic and social expectations, along with the determination and increasing ability, especially as a result of improved access to education, to achieve them (e.g. LeVine, 1993). Women are becoming ever more active members of Mexican society at all levels (see for example
Craske, 1994; Marchand, 1995), and to suggest that migration to the US represents the only road to women's empowerment would be to deny the changing reality of contemporary Mexico, along with its implications for women's roles and economic and social positions.

The goals and ideals which the discourses of 'developed world' feminism project on to women of the 'developing world' are not necessarily those which they would express themselves. Hence assessing the degree of empowerment which immigrant women have achieved against standards developed by 'developed world' feminisms ignores the ideologies of immigrant women. As mentioned earlier for instance, Mexican women in the US may hold on to their role as the person primarily responsible for the household and child care, even if they have paid employment outside the home. In 'developed world' feminist terms, this is interpreted as acceding to continuing subordination, while the immigrant women themselves may see it as retaining a central part of their cultural identity (see Segura, 1994). This is not to say that they do not believe that other household members, especially their male partners, should help them, but the key term here is 'help' them - the women themselves remain in control.

A key point to underscore is that depicting men of the 'developing world' as cultural agents and women of the 'developing world' as the recipients or captives of this male-defined culture denies both women's involvement in shaping cultural practices and their attachment to it.

Migrants are treated badly there but they go out of necessity because they don't earn enough here to live on ... I liked the life there but I like it better here. The Mexican is much more bound by family relations ... You feel dislocated there, no está dentro de lo suyo\(^\text{11}\).

*Juliana, see page 165*

Regard for Mexican culture and a feeling of 'dislocation' arising from a geographical separation from Mexico and being surrounded by an unfamiliar culture can discourage permanent settlement, as evident in the quote above and as I discussed in Chapter Six. Alternatively, this allegiance to Mexican culture can influence the immigrant way of life in the US, preventing the social and cultural assimilation that predominates in most classic

\(^{11}\) Literally, you're not inside you're own.
studies of immigrants in the US and resulting in a deliberate ethnic resilience (Portes, 1987).

At the same time, legal rights for women, especially in relation to rape, sexual assault and domestic violence, are generally viewed by Mexican women as a positive aspect of US society. Rocío’s comment below encapsulates the view of many women in this respect.

What is better is that women can tell men what to do and they can’t here. Women have more freedom and support there. If they’re abused, the attackers get arrested, here they don’t do anything. I went for a short trip and I liked it. I’d like to go to live there with my family.

(Rocío, a 27 year-old mother of four.)

Hence the institutional and broad societal advantages that are perceived to exist for women in the US may be seen to outweigh the negative aspects of the labour market or the household division of labour.

It’s better there for women. They get more respect and everything. It’s better for them even if they have to work in jobs and at home, and get tired ... My daughter is very happy there.

(Lupe, see page 217)

Men may have a conflicting view.

It’s different there in that women in families have rights just because of the simple fact that they’re women. You can’t even raise your voice. The culture of the family is more disintegrated there.

(Manuel, a 30 year-old father of three and a self-employed salesman. He has a brother in California.)

While there may be differences between male and female migrants’ opinions on some issues, there is a degree of consensus in their attitudes towards racism and discrimination against migrants in the US. Rosa and Pancho recount similar impressions of discrimination.

They’re very racist in the US. People don’t just stare at you because you’re different, like they do here, but because they don’t want you to be there. They don’t want Hispanics living in the US, but they’re happy to come and live here - look at all the retired Americans in Guadalajara and Chapala.

(Rosa, see page 165)
They [Mexican migrants] just go to work and save money, they’re not going to harm anyone, but they’re treated badly which makes them want to come back to Mexico. I didn't like the environment much, people look at you as though you’re very small. They don’t want to give you any attention, and they think you’re stupid. It makes you feel bad. There is a lot of racism. They reject you. Of course they’re not all the same. (Pancho, see page 169)

This sense of unity in the face of racism may overshadow gendered concerns, and obscure the fact that ‘race’ and gender also interact. It was suggested in the discussion above that white Americans were more likely to trust female immigrants to work in their home than they were male immigrants. Conversely, in the labour market at large, female immigrants are generally the group most discriminated against in terms of job status, security, pay and working conditions. This parallels the labour market position of white women relative to white men, but immigrant women have two further factors to contend with - ‘race’ and immigrant status - which mean they are relegated to the bottom of the economic hierarchy. In other words, numerous factors act to subordinate migrant women both inside and outside waged work, many common to all migrants and others to women in general, but important differences remain in the economic, political-legal and ideological position of migrant women in comparison to either group (Phizacklea, 1983). These differences are the result of the specific constellation of gender, ‘race’ and class which immigrant women represent.

Respondents commented upon the racism they encountered not just from whites but also from blacks, chicanos and long-term Mexican immigrants, indicating that ‘race’, like gender, is not a category which can be interpreted as a universal and homogenous division between ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ in a given society.

I didn’t like the discrimination I saw, at work and in the streets. They often won’t sell you a ticket in the cinema just because you’re Mexican, they won’t sell you a beer in a bar. There are lots of Mexicans there, as well as lots of other races. It’s gringos and blacks against Mexicans. The chicanos don’t suffer the same discrimination. (Fernando, see page 130)

While ‘gender’ and ‘race’ as uncontested, homogenised and isolated categories are insufficient explanations of behaviour and perceptions, individual migrants may also hold contradictory attitudes towards the US. Lupita for instance has several regrets about her children’s behaviour, which she attributes to the US environment in which they spent a large part of their childhood. She shares many women’s approval of more consensual
marital relations, but is unsure of the looser family structures, perceived lower moral standards, and individualistic outlook, which she believes are typical of the US.

In the US both men and women have lots of freedom. I ask my children why they act as they do - the girls going out late at night to cinemas and dances with boys. They’re Mexican and would never be allowed to do that in Mexico, but they’re used to the US customs now ... If you go out with someone here you have to get married. Divorce is normal there; it exists here as well, but not as much, and really only in the large cities ... I don’t like how children often leave home in the US as soon as they’re 18. In one way it teaches them responsibility, but in another it gives them too much freedom, and teaches them sexual permissiveness and drug-taking. It’s too easy for children to live alone there. If they get a job, fine, but if not the government just gives them money. Sometimes they can qualify for indefinite support and never do anything for themselves ... Not all the customs of the US are bad. For example when a couple makes a decision together in the US it’s very nice, but in general I prefer Mexican customs.

(Lupita, see page 125)

7.4 Conclusion

It has become apparent from this exploration of immigrant women’s experiences in the US that there is no single migrant experience and no simple relationship between gender and migration. Some women may indeed feel empowered as a result of their migration, yet others feel oppressed. Both sensations may be associated with encounters with the US labour market and culture, but the responses of individual women are different. This is partly due to differences in the nature of the interaction of the immigrant with US economy and society, but this in itself is shaped by gender, and also by ‘race’, immigrant status, previous background and household relations.

The arguments I have put forward in this chapter have also lent further support to the assertion that there are two parallel and distinct migration flows between the study sites in Guadalajara and the US, one of short-term migrants, the other of longer-term migrants. I have shown that the propensity to fall into one of these groups rather than the other is linked with legal status and education, both of which influence the nature of a migrant’s interaction with the labour market, which in turn impacts on the likelihood of ‘settlement’. Undocumented migrants are more closely associated with the most marginalised and stagnant occupations, while the jobs which legal migrants take up have been more affected
by the recent re-structuring of the US economy. I have also suggested that migrants in the short-term group are more protective of Mexican cultural values and perhaps less open to change, and that this in itself is likely to encourage their return to Mexico.

Although most immigrants are disadvantaged, some are more so because of the specific attributes they possess, for instance being female or being undocumented. Moreover, while they may be relatively disadvantaged in US society, some migrants may perceive an improvement in their situation relative to that in Mexico. Yet this is not inevitable. The major conclusion which has arisen from this overview of Mexican immigrants in the US is the relational nature of the variables influencing the migration experience and the impossibility of their isolation. Hence there is a need to differentiate between migrants not just as women and men or legal and undocumented, but as individuals with a variety of characteristics which influence their migration experience.

Gender and legal status are important, but so too are age, education, marital status, work history and personal values. Neither are influences limited to the individual level. Factors operating at the household and societal levels also mould the migration experience, producing a wide range of possible outcomes rather than a narrow pre-defined set. At the household level, the migrant's position in the household, the nature of household relations and the prevailing ideological and decision-making structures are critical. Constructions of gender, ethnicity and nationality, as well as the economic structure of the host society are important; neither can public and political opinion of immigration be ignored at the macro-social level.

Since the outcome of these myriad interactions varies for every migrant, no a priori assumptions should be made about the effects of migration. From a feminist perspective, it is misguided to portray migration to the ‘developed world’ as an escape route from patriarchy for migrant women from the ‘developing world’. Not only does this viewpoint privilege the society of the ‘developed world’ over that of the ‘developing world’, thus inviting the charge of ethnocentrism, but it also overlooks the differentiation which exists amongst immigrant women and amongst women in the host society.

‘Women’ do not constitute an homogenous category, although they are often conceptually homogenised. Some migrant women may perceive themselves to have benefited
personally from their migration. Yet their position within society should also be viewed
in relation to that of others, and their sensation of empowerment on an individual and
household level should not be used to justify the continued marginalisation of immigrant
women (and men) within the host society at large. In other words, the advantages that
individual migrants have gained are not a legitimation for a labour market and a society
that is disposed to discriminate against them and to perceive and behave towards them as
though they were not just ‘different’ but also ‘inferior’. While some immigrants may
succeed against the odds, or at least feel that they have succeeded, this does not mean that
the odds should not be removed.
Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have explored the relationship of gender with the social process of migration in the context of movement between the city of Guadalajara, Mexico and the US. I have also tried to provide a counter to the recent research focus on migration in the context of receiving societies and immigration control by turning to a sending society and to the narratives and experiences of migrants themselves. The urban location of my research contributes to the originality of the thesis in that empirical studies of urban migrant-sending areas in Mexico and in the ‘developing world’ more generally are scarce.

Data from the study communities indicate that migration is important in an urban context as well as in the rural settings which have framed most previous migration research in Mexico. The data also point to the active involvement of women in migration to a substantial extent. The urban origins of the migrants identified in my research and the fact that many were women confirms the macro-scale trends identified in the literature at the meso-level of my research sample. My data also pointed to the significance of return migration, a phenomenon thus far largely ignored in the literature on Mexico-US migration. I would also like to suggest in this closing chapter that my thesis has significance beyond the immediate case study.

In the introduction to this thesis I put forward three specific objectives directed towards the more general aims of investigating the interaction between gender and the migration process and of developing a gendered conceptual approach to migration. These objectives were: critically to review recent migration theory and to develop as an alternative the gendered household approach; to use this approach to investigate empirically the gendered process of migration; and to discuss the conceptual contributions that the gendered household approach can make to the study of migration and of other social processes. In the context of these aims and objectives, I want to review here the findings of my thesis, to discuss some further implications of my research results and to put forward some suggestions for future research.
8.2 Overview

Three themes have emerged from the research findings: the inability of extant migration theory to incorporate gender satisfactorily; the significance of gender through all phases of the migration process; and the differentiation which occurs at all levels, for instance within and between households, between women and men and amongst women (and men). In this section I shall discuss some of the most important findings of my thesis in relation to these three themes.

Firstly, through a critique of the migration literature, I have argued that while there is a recognition that women as well as men participate in migration, and even that their experiences may be different, current theorising on migration does not reflect this recognition. Neither does it address the fact that the role of gender goes beyond conditioning the differential participation of women and men as migrants. In other words, gender affects not just women’s and men’s propensity to become migrants, but also the way they are affected by and how they perceive migration, both as migrants and non-migrants. The impacts of the migration of a partner or child are gendered, as is the experience of border-crossing and of living and working in the destination society.

One of the major faults of the more traditional theoretical approaches to migration is the excessive emphasis they place on just one level of analysis, be it the macro- or the micro-level. My analysis of recent frameworks such as the structuration perspective and the ‘household strategies’ approach has suggested that while they have been more progressive in attempting to combine the two, most of these approaches also marginalise gender. In an effort to go beyond a cursory nod towards gender, and to combine the micro- and the macro- at the meso-level, I have elaborated a gendered household approach to migration that places gender at the centre of analysis. I have also suggested that this approach may be more widely applicable outside the field of migration.

According to my findings, women were more likely than men to migrate for ‘family’ reasons, and conversely men were more likely than women to migrate for ‘economic’ reasons. Yet because many women initially migrate for family reasons does not mean that they do not become economically active at their destination. Similarly, while men may be economic migrants, they are also influenced by family concerns, particularly in the
return migration decision. The tendency of current theory to see men as economic migrants and women as family migrants can lead to a classification of migrants on the basis of their gender, regardless of their actual behaviour. Migrants, as people, have multiple and fluid identities, which from this perspective are reduced to fixed and singular ones.

The emphasis in the literature on economic and familial motives means that other motivations are sidelined. I have emphasised the role of the ‘adventure motive’ for the respondents in my research, and argued that to ignore it reflects ethnocentric assumptions about the limited motives of people from the ‘developing world’. I have also suggested that the eagerness to impute either economic or familial motives to migration reinforces the tendency to classify women as family migrants and men as economic migrants because of migration theory’s inconsistent approach to men and women. Female ‘adventure’ migrants tend to be subsumed into the category of ‘family’ migrants, while male ‘adventure’ migrants become ‘labour’ migrants, even where in practice the two behave in a similar manner. These inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the categorisation of migrants poses a serious challenge to existing typologies of migrants.

Secondly, through my analysis of migration it became clear that gender played an important role in migration at every stage in the process. But the images in the literature of undocumented migrants as predominantly male and of a dualistic division between women as non-migrants or secondary family migrants and men as independent economic migrants were found to be insufficient to cover the range of migrant experiences and thus need to be reassessed. The risks associated with undocumented border crossings were perceived to affect women and men differently, and the coping strategies employed against these risks were gendered as a reflection of these perceptions. Despite this, similar proportions of male and female migrants had no documents. The stereotypes of women as family migrants and men as economic migrants are also fraught with inherent oversimplifications and misrepresentations particularly detrimental to the image, and indeed treatment, of women. Female migrants are portrayed as passive, vulnerable, ‘non-risk takers’, in opposition to the view of male migrants as active, brave and enterprising. In reality, such a dualistic division between women and men was inapplicable, although motivations were gendered and the household context was particularly important in shaping these motivations. For instance, single mothers finding themselves in the position of major
(or only) breadwinner in their household may view migration not only as a means of economic support but also as a way to escape from the social disapprobation which single mothers in Mexico still sometimes attract.

Gender also influenced the experience of migrants at their destination. The conventional wisdom presumes that women who migrate from the 'developing' to the 'developed' world automatically benefit through exposure to a more liberated culture and the opportunity for paid employment. I have challenged this presumption on the grounds that it fails to distinguish between women and that it denigrates migrants' own culture and underestimates their attachment to it. It reflects an ethnocentric perspective that projects 'developed world' feminist aspirations and values as universal and uncontested. Paid employment does not necessarily 'liberate' migrant women, and I have shown that immigrant women are generally (one of) the most disadvantaged group(s) in the labour market because of the intersection of their gender, immigrant status and 'race'. Moreover, not all women migrants work outside the home, and as a result those who do not do so may have specific problems of isolation and adjustment. The assumption that migrant women from the 'developing world' are emancipated through paid work in the 'developed world' at the same time that migrant women are generally regarded as 'family' migrants exposes yet another contradiction in the prevailing image of migrant women in the literature.

A third theme to emerge was that of differentiation. The single, male migrant stereotype did not adequately reflect the reality of migrant women, migrant men and whole-household migration. In terms of the migration decision, both the concept of a collective 'household strategy' and that of a 'traditional' patriarchal household were found to be inadequate in describing the complexity of negotiation, domination and resistance which was often part of the migration decision. Neither were women and men found to be in a standard position of subordination or domination - patterns of authority and decision-making varied considerably between households. I also argued that the range of migration decision-making structures reflected the varied patterns which occurred in household decision-making in general.

Just as the (migration) decision-making process varied between households, so too did the impacts of migration. No linear relationship between the absence of a migrant with a
specific household position and the effects experienced by the other household members could be established. Most importantly, the connection which is often assumed between male migration and increased female independence was not an automatic one. Some women whose partners were migrants gained in autonomy while others felt that they were subject to increased control by other household or family members. The wives of male migrants were however often seen to be the most vulnerable to suffering as a result of failed remittances. The impacts of migration on the sending household were mediated by the ideologies of gender held by dominant household members. For example, women who believed that there was nothing intrinsically objectionable about ‘traditional’ patriarchal household relations were least likely to instigate change if their husband migrated.

Similarly, in terms of the experience of immigration, although gender was an important influence on the nature of the interaction with US economy and society, there was no single ‘male’ or ‘female’ experience. Immigrant status, ‘race’ and education, *inter alia*, were also seen to be important in shaping this interaction. Those without documents, for instance, whether male or female, often said that they felt insecure and vulnerable, both economically and socially. Moreover, factors at the household and societal levels, such as the nature of household relations, the state of the labour market, social constructions of ‘race’ and gender and immigration policy were also influential. Domestic workers, for example, were assumed to be female in both Mexico and the US, but in the US the additional layering of ‘race’ and immigrant status has resulted in a construction of domestic workers as undocumented Mexican women, and conversely, Mexican women in the US are often assumed to be undocumented domestic workers, demonstrating the extent to which such stereotypes can take hold.

It is therefore misleading to differentiate between migrants as ‘women’ and ‘men’, or as ‘legal’ and ‘undocumented’. These groups are not homogenous, and migrants should be seen as individuals with a variety of characteristics which influence their interaction as migrants with the receiving society, rather than as depersonalised members of artificially uniform categories. There is also a political danger in assuming that migrant women (and men) from the ‘developing world’ automatically benefit from migration to the ‘developed world’. Specifically, while such an assumption of advantage over the country of origin exists, it can be used as a legitimation for overlooking the disadvantaged position of most migrants in the destination society.
8.3 Gender, migration and the household

This thesis was derived from an interest in the interaction between gender and migration. I have tried to explore this interaction through linking the interactions which exist between gender and the household and between the household and migration. In other words I have used the household as a connecting mechanism through which to draw together gender and migration. I have also argued that the household represents an appropriate unit of analysis in migration studies because it stands conceptually at the interface of the macro- and micro-levels. In the gendered household approach the micro-level of the individual migrant is embedded in the context of that individual’s relations with other members of the household. The macro-level of policy, labour market conditions and society is viewed in terms of its impact on the household and its members. At the same time, drawing on feminist criticisms of conventional constructions of the monolithic ‘household’, I have argued against the conceptualisation of migration as a ‘household strategy’ and for its reconceptualisation as the outcome of a process with varying degrees of disagreement, negotiation, consensus and domination.

It has been made clear that the household is far from being an undifferentiated unit. Gender is one of the most important axes structuring this differentiation. Social constructions of gender influence the roles that household members play and the relations they have with one another. The constructions operating at the household level are derived from societal norms but at the same time they can ‘feed back’ to transform or reinforce these norms. For instance, the traditional norm is that Mexican women do not migrate, at least independently, to the US. Yet women are increasingly doing just this, either out of economic necessity or out of a growing sense of independence. As a result of this the norm can be observed to be shifting in the direction of accepting female migration, although this acceptance may be gained only through an emphasis on new, socially admissible though often inaccurate stereotypes, such as women as ‘family migrants’.

At the same time, the increasing feelings of autonomy which motivate some women’s migration may build upon societal attitudes increasingly widespread in modern Mexico and perhaps particularly in education. These feelings impact directly on interactions between household members, with younger generations of women especially likely to be unwilling
to accept 'traditional' roles and life-styles without questioning them. This introduces a second axis of differentiation - generation - which I have argued structures the relations between household members both in its own right and in its combination with gender. I have suggested that there is a complex association between the two variables of gender and generation, such that 'daughters' hold the contradictory position of being potentially either the most subordinate household member or the most likely to desire and demand change. This contradiction points to the fact that (changes in) societal norms are not taken on board in all households and even where they are, they may be subscribed to differentially by various household members.

The variation in the degree of autonomy which daughters possess and the fact that some young women can be seen to be acting independently and not as part of a concerted 'household strategy', stands in direct contradiction to the depiction in the literature of women (perhaps most especially daughters) from the 'developing world' as uniformly passive and subordinate. This image reflects an ethnocentric view that is sadly not absent from many white, 'developed world' feminisms. The incongruity between the western stereotype of the patriarchal 'third world household' and the reality of the lives of women in households in my research communities is illustrative of a general misconstruction of the 'developing world' by academics (mainly from the 'developed world' but also sometimes from the 'developing world').

This discrepancy is increasingly becoming a source of debate in feminist discourses. One of the central concerns is the hegemonic assumption of 'western' (white, middle-class) feminists that their ideals are universal. Thus, not only does 'western' feminist discourse claim the right to describe 'third world' women, it also presumes to know, understand and represent their wishes. These assumptions are increasingly being questioned and challenged. 'Western' feminist texts on 'third world' women have been criticised as essentialist and ahistorical, presenting 'third world woman' as inferior to the modern, liberated, feminist and culturally superior 'first world woman'. Feminist researchers are now seeking a way forward and beyond these problems, some drawing on postmodern and postcolonial literature, others eschewing these as elitist, fragmenting and politically disabling.
Returning to the concept of the differentiated household, I propose that this differentiation should not prevent the concept of households from being developed as an empirical and analytical tool. I also suggest that the gendered household approach may be able to make a modest contribution to the feminist project. The differences which can be observed between household members in terms of their gender, their generation, their position and authority in the household, their beliefs and values and their activities outside the household, should be used as a starting point for the analysis of how various social processes are gendered. The differentiation and conflicts which may exist in any household should be used as the basis for the reconstruction of the household as an analytic unit rather than as a reason for its abandonment. The definition of 'the household' in such a framework should be conceived in relation to the social and cultural context and to the specific research interests at hand. This may help to avoid the imposition of 'developed world' norms, or 'developed world' stereotypes of the 'developing world' on to diverse research situations and may thus have something to offer feminist discourses which consider this problem.

Yet prioritising differences between household members and defining the household in relation to its context represent only two parts of the whole story. As could be seen from my research findings, differences between individual household members and other members of society were also important, both in migrant origin and destination countries. In my study, education, occupational background, 'race' and immigrant status were found to be particularly important in configuring the nature of an individual's relation to and position in society at large. Prioritising gender is important, but it is also important to recognise the simultaneous influence of other variables. Partly because of the role of these other factors, which has become clear in my study but is not explicitly theorised in my conceptual approach, I would not wish to suggest that the gendered household approach represents the only suitable approach to migration. I have moreover pointed out that it falls into the category of frameworks that attempt to explain the perpetuation of migration as an aggregate flow rather than its initiation and have suggested that it could thus be used in tandem with other approaches to migration. It seems to me to have particular potential for inclusion in the ongoing development of the structuration paradigm in migration, since the analysis in this perspective is on three levels, the middle one of which is the household.
I have argued however that the gendered household approach can analyse the participation and experiences of individual migrants in a way which explicitly prioritises gender. Linking migration to the household also represents a more migrant-centred approach because its focus is on migrants as individual people in a meaningful (to them) social context rather than as statistical components of an aggregate flow. My claim is thus that the gendered household approach has the potential to provide a more complete picture of the gendered migration process as it affects individual people, embedded in the relationships of reciprocity, conflict, hierarchy and co-operation which make up the social structures of the household.

The centring of the household also allows the complete process of migration to be analysed, from the migration decision through to return. At every stage of migration, adopting a household perspective can result in a deeper analysis. For instance, the experience which an individual has as a migrant is important and clearly should be analysed, but the meaning of this migration, in both economic and non-economic terms, to non-migrant household members left behind is also significant. Both of these facets of the migration process can be captured using a household approach. The holistic view of the migration process which a household perspective can offer is in itself something to be applauded, since many approaches tend to focus on one aspect to the detriment and marginalisation of others. In my study, for example, the relevance of return migration was revealed where it may have been overlooked had I adopted a different approach, such as one which relied on aggregate border-crossing statistics.

8.4 Broader applicability

I chose to explore the interactions between gender, migration and the household in the context of a specific city in Mexico. The question which now begs to be answered is how far the conclusions which I have drawn from my case study are more broadly applicable. Among the restrictions on generalisation which need to be recognised are the small sample, the geographically limited focus of the research project and the fact that the research was conducted only in the migrant-sending area.
It could be argued, for instance, that Guadalajara represents a unique example of a Mexican city, that the conditions it presents are not to be found elsewhere and hence that any study conducted there is not generalisable. It is true that Guadalajara, as the capital of Jalisco, is located in a traditional migrant-sending state and migration may be expected therefore to play a greater role in this city than elsewhere. Zacatecas and Zamora however are also similarly located in states with a long history of out-migration to the US. At the same time, Guadalajara, as the second largest city in Mexico, logically could be expected to draw in migrants from other parts of the country rather than to send out international migrants itself.

It may be anticipated that a large urban conglomeration such as Guadalajara would be a source of new trends and norms in society, such as more autonomy for women, thus being distinct from Mexican society as a whole. Yet in this it would surely be similar to other large Mexican cities, not least Mexico City. In any case, Guadalajara and the state of Jalisco have the reputation of being deeply conservative in values and outlook. Even if the city were to be seen as characterised by new values and practices - it does have a high level of female economic participation, for instance - surely it would represent a forerunner rather than a deviation. In other words such a difference would be of timing rather than of substance. While each geographical location clearly embodies its own history and sports its own idiosyncrasies, I see no reason why the general processes identified as occurring in Guadalajara should not be observable elsewhere in urban Mexico.

At the level of 'country as case study', many more Mexican women than men were eligible to enter the US under the family reunification programme initiated by IRCA in 1986. These women were joining male family/household members who had initially migrated to the US without documents but who had gained legal status through IRCA. The extensive legalisation programme undertaken in the US as a result of IRCA may appear to be unique, but a parallel may be drawn here with flows of women migrating for family reunification with former male guest workers and labour migrants in Europe from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. Hence it may be argued that Mexico-US migration has

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1 I would like to emphasise that I am not making any assumptions about the activities of these women migrants at their destination based on their mode of entry.
followed a pattern previously laid down by European migration because of the institution of similar immigration policies.

Of course, these migration flows are not directly comparable, not least because of the changes in the global economy which have occurred between them. Yet this comparison can be used to illustrate how insights derived from a study grounded in a specific location could be applied in different time-space contexts which nonetheless have some similarities, in this case with regard to policy. The fact that in some situations, including the Mexico-US and European cases mentioned above, men have been the initial migrants and women have migrated to join them later by means of legal family reunification measures should not go unremarked. This is not the 'natural' order of things: it is the outcome of particular combinations of conditions at both the household and societal levels which have meant that men have often been more likely than women to be in the first stream of labour migrants.

To expand, analysis of the Mexican situation suggests that the predominance of men amongst undocumented migrants to the US before IRCA (although women also migrated at this time) was due to: the difference in wage levels between Mexico and the US; demand in the US for male agricultural labour; the 'traditional' role of Mexican men as the economic 'provider'; the responsibility of rural Mexican men for farming landholdings and the ability of women to take over this task; and the social construction of women in Mexico as 'belonging' to the private sphere of the household and family. When many of these male migrants were granted legal status under IRCA, it was inevitable that a majority of the people eligible to be reunified with them in the US were their wives. At the same time, the provisions of IRCA assumed that family reunification migrants would be primarily women (and children) because of social constructions in the US of men as breadwinners and women as dependants. Although this analysis is derived explicitly from the Mexico-US context, it contains several more general interpretations which could be tested against other situations in which similar phenomena can be observed.

The research upon which this thesis is based was confined to the sending side of the migration equation. This choice arose from both conceptual and practical considerations. Conceptually, I wanted to move the focus deliberately from the receiving side, as recent research seems to have been predominantly concentrated there. My focus on the communities of origin meant however that narratives of the experience of migration and
immigration were obtained after the event rather than during it, or from people other than the migrants themselves. On the other hand, I was able to hear first-hand accounts of the experiences of non-migrants in the absence of migrants from their households. I was also able to talk with return migrants. This led to my appreciation of the importance of a phenomenon which is often overlooked in research conducted in migrant destination areas: return migration. At the same time, my research design may have led to an underestimation of whole-household, potentially permanent migrations that left no household members behind to record their absence. In other words, research located exclusively in either the origin or the destination has certain disadvantages: ideally, a study of migration should encompass both sending and receiving areas and all stages of the migration process.

In terms of the conceptual framework I applied in this thesis, I have tried to underline within the gendered household approach the need to interpret patterns and processes from the perspective of the actors involved rather than from that of the researcher. Clearly this is difficult to achieve in practice, and also raises the problem of representation: who is able to speak for whom? The recognition that the respondents in a research project may have different views of (their own and ‘other’) culture and society from those of the researcher does however represent a tentative step forward. The use of this approach in my research led to the appreciation that women migrants are differentiated and that gender is not alone in circumscribing women’s experience of migration, but is joined by other factors such as ‘race’ and, in this case, immigrant status. It may thus contain the seeds of ‘an approach that recognises the multiple axes/identities which shape women’s lives, particularly race, class, age and culture’ (Parpart and Marchand, 1995:18). Both the conceptual and the methodological aspects of such an approach could surely be applied fruitfully elsewhere.

8.5 Policy implications

Whilst the development of policy recommendations has not been a major concern of this thesis, I should like to make a few comments on this issue here, if only because of the emphasis that has been placed on it in both the political and the academic spheres. At the same time, I would like to question this emphasis as representing only a partial approach to the study of migration. Assessing the impact of existing policies and on the basis of
this appraisal suggesting changes or new policies is important, but it seems to me that there is currently too much stress on evaluating the success of specific policies in controlling (for which read reducing) immigration and not enough on considering its broader effects. Neither can the top-down policy evaluation approach shed much light on the process of migration at the micro-level of the individual or household, although conversely micro-level analysis can (and should) consider the impacts of the macro-policy context.

Having expressed my doubts about migration policy studies, the first point I would like to make with reference to policy is related to return migration. I have emphasised that while there may be an increasing amount of longer-term and potentially permanent migration, short-term return migration has not been displaced. I have described the situation as one of two parallel migration flows. Yet policy increasingly seems to be designed on the assumption that all migration is permanent. Moreover, I have shown that short-term return migrants are more likely to be concentrated in low-paying jobs with poor working conditions, and thus risk being doubly marginalised. They therefore warrant more policy attention than they currently receive.

There also seems to have been a distinct focus on policies to control immigration to the detriment of those aimed at facilitating integration. In fact initiatives such as Proposition 187 explicitly discourage integration. Since immigration control has rarely been successful, I would argue that there is a need to look again at this focus. A point which is in a sense related is that the lack of progressive integration policies seems to operate on the implicit principle that those migrants (legal and undocumented) who make it past barriers to entry benefit automatically from their migration and thus need no further help. This principle should be uncovered and challenged because it lends political legitimation to the maintenance or even reinforcement of the disadvantaged position in which many immigrants find themselves in the labour market and in society generally.

My research findings suggest that lack of legal status can lead to feelings of increased vulnerability - economic, social and political - on the part of migrants. Arguing from a human rights perspective, the logical outcome of this finding would be to urge the US to formulate legalisation programmes so as to reduce this vulnerability. I also suggested that migrants without legal status were more likely to fall into the group of short-term migrants.
As I claimed that their propensity to return was partly a function of the vulnerability these migrants felt, this presents no problem to this proposal so long as the human rights perspective is maintained. From the point of view of policy makers interested in immigration control however, the possible link between lack of legal status and return migration could well act as a disincentive to the introduction of legalisation programmes.

This illustrates two of the contradictory views (migrant/human rights versus the receiving state) which may be held on the issue of migration and for me at least underlines the undesirability of a single-minded pursuit of immigration control through immigration policy. Further weight is lent to this argument by the fact that whatever controls are enacted, migration persists or even increases (see Cornelius et al., 1994). In other words, policies which make legal immigration more difficult tend to increase the amount of undocumented immigration. As argued above, these undocumented immigrants feel more vulnerable and may return sooner than their legal counterparts, but they do not desist from migrating in the first place. In other words, the only certain effect of policies aimed at reducing immigration is an increase in the vulnerability of those migrants who are outside the group of legal immigrants as defined by such policies. This seems to me to offer little justification for policies aimed at migration control, especially when many of those who stand to be most negatively affected are Mexican and when the leaders of Mexico, important partners in NAFTA, have begun to express concern about the treatment Mexican nationals are receiving in the US.

Thus far the points I have made have spoken very generally to policy matters, but it should be remembered that the impacts of policy are very likely to be gendered, whether or not this is the specific intention of policy makers. I should like to turn now to consider how far the gendered patterns I observed can be interpreted as the results of a specific policy context and what, if any steps need to be taken. As far as it can be judged from my research results, it seems that similar proportions of men and women migrate from Mexico to the US without documents, so that the general points about vulnerability made above apply across the board. In addition though, I have identified women as being more vulnerable to sexual abuse by agents of the Border Patrol, as well as being susceptible to the violence and attacks to which male migrants may also be exposed. Whether or not migrants are 'illegal' in terms of being excluded from the groups deemed as legitimate by
current policy, this abusive behaviour on the part of US government agents is unacceptable and an effort should be made to eliminate it.

Mexican women have benefited from the family reunification provisions of IRCA as a means of entry to the US, but this may reinforce the stereotype of women as ‘family migrants’. The perception on the part of employers that women immigrants are secondary workers may in turn act to depress their wage rates. Special provisions should also be made for immigrant women without paid work outside the home, as they may face particular problems of isolation and depression. A first move could be to establish and promote language learning for such women, to reduce their feelings of alienation and inability to communicate and also to lessen their dependence on other (often male) household members.

The emphasis on migration control and the increasing militarisation of the US border with Mexico has resulted in a rise in the (perceived and actual) level of physical risk associated with crossing the border without documents. Since the dangers of migration have always discouraged some women (and men) from migrating, both because of their own fears and because of the ‘altruistic’ restrictions imposed upon their movements by male household members, increased migration control may eventually have the effect of decreasing female migration from Mexico. This would represent a regression in the relative freedom of movement which Mexican women have gained. I am not suggesting that US immigration policy should necessarily aim to encourage female undocumented migration, but I am proposing its decline as a possible effect of a harsher approach. Neither am I proposing that Mexican women should run the gauntlet of the US Border Patrol. I do however want to emphasise that the issue of human rights for migrants crossing the US border is a crucial one and that the current effects of border policing are gendered, as are those of all immigration policies.

8.6 Future research directions and final remarks

In this chapter so far I have hinted at areas in need of further research, but here I would like to make three direct suggestions, based upon reflections on my research and on its broader applicability. The first is the further development of the gendered household
approach, both in migration studies and in other fields. I believe that this approach has the potential to analyse social processes as inherently gendered, but it requires further testing in different social, cultural and political contexts before claims for its wider applicability can be made confidently. The weakest aspect of the gendered household approach as I have formulated it here, in relation to migration studies, is in its links to the macro-level. I have theorised the macro-structural level as part of the framework, but have developed this level somewhat less than the micro- and meso-levels of the individual and her/his interactions with other household members. I have suggested that an attempt to combine the gendered household approach with the structuration perspective in migration could prove fruitful and a similar synthesis of theory may be desirable in other fields. In other words, I feel that the gendered household approach has potential and now further research needs to build upon its qualified success. Particular emphasis should be placed on the conceptual incorporation of other sources of differentiation, such as ‘race’.

A second priority is a migration research project which encompasses both the origin and the destination of migration. I have argued that locating my research in the Mexican sending community had certain advantages over having a single site in the US, but having a site in both countries could have resulted in the collection of first-hand and ‘fresher’ data more often. A criticism which I have made of my research is that I felt it missed out on cases in which all members of a household had migrated to the US and remained there on a long-term or permanent basis. Locating such households and long-term and permanent immigrants in general would have been possible using a two-site strategy. In fact I suggest that an important question for future migration research in this area is: why do some people return to Mexico and others stay in the US?

A third research proposal represents a different methodological approach, and indeed one that would present many practical difficulties but could result in some enriching data if it succeeded. Building on the notion that both the origin and destination of migration should form part of a migration study, a similar concept sees the investigation of the whole migration process in an holistic manner as crucial. An ethnographic study of the members of a small number of migrant households could provide fascinating insights into all stages of the migration process I have discussed here. The idea would be to follow both migrant and non-migrant household members through the migration decision, the migration itself, the experience of immigration in the US, return (if any) and the impacts on any household
members in Mexico. The use of this idea conceptually in the organisation of my thesis led me to reflect on the desirability of analysing these same phases empirically through the experiences of a selected group of people. The drawbacks are clearly enormous: finding households in which one or members intend to migrate; the time needed for the migration experience to develop; and the problems of talking with both non-migrant and migrant household members in Mexico and the US in approximately the same time frame. Overcoming these hurdles to operationalising this project thus represents a challenge in itself, but one to which I think it would be worth rising.

I should like to stress at the close of this thesis that whichever perspective or methodology we choose to adopt in future research into migration, it should be one that is able to recognise migrants as people, with their own needs, aspirations, hopes and problems. Migrants are not 'a flow' or 'a threat' or an undifferentiated group. They are individual people with unique characteristics and complex motivations. They are not passive victims, but they are often vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, as the recent horrific beating of two suspected undocumented Mexican immigrants (one a woman, the other her partner) by Californian police testifies.
APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE

FECHA
DIRECCION

NO. de CU.
NO. de PG.

HORA EMPEZADO
HORA TERMINADO

1a) Es ud. la señora/el señor de esta casa? Sí No
Si no, quien es?

1b) Tenencia
Se renta o es su propia casa? Se renta Propia

1c) El/la señor(a) esta soltero/a o casado/a? Soltero Casado Otra

1d) Edad del hogar
Durante cuánto tiempo estan casados?
O Durante cuánto tiempo ha estado el/la solo(a) dueño(a)/alquilino(a)?

1e) Tiempo en Guadalajara
Durante cuánto tiempo han vivido, como una pareja, en Guadalajara?
O Durante cuánto tiempo ha vivido como el/la dueño(a)/inquilino(a) en Guadalajara?

1f) Miembros del hogar
Quien vive aquí como parte del hogar? (CUADRO 1)

1g) Tienen otros hijos que ya no viven aquí? Sí No

CUADRO 1A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hijo/Hija</th>
<th>Edad</th>
<th>Escuela</th>
<th>En dónde viven?</th>
<th>Tiene familia</th>
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244
2) **Detalles de Trabajo** (CUADRO 2)

3) Hay alguien que solía vivir con ustedes (vivó aquí más de 6 meses) pero vive fuera de Guadalajara en este momento? (CUADRO 3)
   - Sí
   - No

4) Alguien de esta casa vivió fuera de Guadalajara durante más de 6 meses, y después volvió a Guadalajara? (CUADRO 4)
   - Sí
   - No

5) Ha ido ud. o algún pariente cercano (que no necesariamente vive aquí con ud.) alguna vez a los Estados Unidos? (CUADRO 5)
   - Sí
   - No

6) Alguién más quitó o se juntó con esta casa por más de 6 meses? (CUADRO 6)
   - Sí
   - No

Y algunas preguntas más generales:-

1) Piensa ud. que es una cosa bien o mal que Mexicanos van a los Estados Unidos? Por qué?

2) Piensa ud. es más fácil para las mujeres o los hombres a emigrar y conseguir trabajo en los Estados Unidos? Por qué?

3) Piensa ud. que la migración ha cambiado la vida para la gente aquí? Cómo?

**ADICIONAL NOTAS Y OBSERVACIONES**

**TOTAL NUMERO DE PAGINAS**

245
CUADRO 1. LOS DETALLES DEL MIEMBROS DEL HOGAR EN ESTE MOMENTO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miembro del hogar</th>
<th>Sexo</th>
<th>Edad</th>
<th>Estado civil</th>
<th>Lugar de nacimiento (estado y municipio)</th>
<th>Escolaridad</th>
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246
2a) En qué trabaja ud. y los otros miembros de la casa?

CUADRO 2. LOS DETALLES DE TRABAJO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miembro del hogar</th>
<th>Estado de trabajo</th>
<th>Ocupación</th>
<th>Trabajo doméstico Sí o no</th>
<th>Contribuye algo para el gasto Sí o no</th>
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2b) Hay otras fuentes de ingresos? Qué?
Sí   No

Detalles de cantidad y frecuencia
CUADRO 3. LOS DETALLES DE LA MIGRACION EN ESTE MOMENTO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miembro del hogar y ocupación anterior</th>
<th>Donde vive y en qué trabaja?</th>
<th>Cuando salió?</th>
<th>Edad al salir</th>
<th>Razón de migración y piensa ud. que vuelve?</th>
<th>Educación, estado civil y otros detalles</th>
<th>Docs?</th>
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CUADRO 4. HISTORIA DE LA MIGRACION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miembro del hogar</th>
<th>Donde vivió?</th>
<th>Duración de ausencia y fecha de salir</th>
<th>Edad al salir</th>
<th>Razón para migración</th>
<th>Razón para vuelta</th>
<th>Donde vivió al volver?</th>
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CUADRO 5. EXPERIENCIA DE LA MIGRACION INTERNACIONAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miembro de la familia</th>
<th>Donde fue</th>
<th>Duración de ausencia y cuando</th>
<th>Edad al salir Ed.</th>
<th>Razón para migración</th>
<th>Razón y fecha de vuelta</th>
<th>Docs?</th>
<th>Origen de mig.</th>
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Notas en contactos en EEUU y papeles

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APPENDIX TWO: THEMES FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The semi-structured interviews based around the following themes were conducted with people who had already participated in the random questionnaire survey and who were prepared to discuss further some of the issues I was interested in investigating. The areas of discussion presented here were designed to be relevant to people in both migrant and non-migrant households, and to both migrants and non-migrants. Some issues were hoped to be of general interest, others of interest to specific groups of people such as migrants, partners of migrants and so on. Similar themes were introduced in conversations with both women and men, with the shift in emphasis dependent on the respondent’s interests rather than on my own. Some of the more objective questions were also included in the questionnaire, and were repeated here to initiate conversation and to stimulate an elaboration and discussion of the information already recorded. Not all topics were discussed with every respondent. From these interviews, I hoped to gain some understanding of how the process of migration was experienced by migrants themselves and by those who remained behind.

General

* Opinions of migration to the US.

* Perceptions of men’s and women’s involvement in migration and how they are affected.

* Work in the US - job availability, wage rates, gendering of the labour market.

* Perceptions of US culture, particularly attitudes towards women, women’s behaviour and the family.

* Contrasts with Mexican culture. Positive and negative aspects.

Details of current migration and migration history

* Specifics of who has migrated, when, where, length of migration and activities of migrant at destination.

* Opinions of how migrant and other household members were affected by this migration.

* Migration history of respondent and other household members, and respondent’s views of these migrations and their impacts on the migrant(s) and the household.

* Future plans for migration / thoughts about the possibilities of migration

Decision-making process

* How the idea of migration came about, and whose idea it was.
* Household discussions of the migration decision and who made the final decision.
  Involvement and opinions of various household members.

* Resolution of any disagreements.

* Association between person/people who made the migration decision and who generally makes other decisions.

* What the respondent felt about the decision and whether their feelings were taken into account by other household members.

**Communication**

* Keeping in touch with the migrant - eg. how often and through what means.

* Return visits of migrant / visits by other household members to migrant in US. Reasons, expectations and realities.

* Remittances (in both directions). Feelings about receipt (or not) of money and/or about being asked to send money to the migrant.

**Changes in the household after migration**

a) **Work**

* Change in jobs or activities of household members while migrant was absent.

* Feelings about change in work patterns, divisions of domestic labour etc.

b) **Income**

* Migrant’s contributions before migration and how their loss affected the household.

* Changes in contributions of other household members during migrant’s absence, and feelings about this.

* Perceptions of whether it was easier or more difficult to ‘manage’ financially during migrant’s absence.

* Management of money and any changes.

c) **Decisions**

* Decision-making patterns in household currently.

* Changes in decision-making during and after migration, both for migrant and for other household members.
* Respondent’s feelings about whether they have more say now or before the migration, whether they themselves were the migrant or not.

**d) Children (if any)**

* The impacts of the migrant’s absence on any children in the household in terms of behaviour, emotions, school work etc.

**e) Community links/networks**

* Contact with people outside the household and changes during migrant’s absence (and after return).

* Kinds of help or support given / received.

**f) Household composition**

* Leaving or joining of household members during the migrant’s absence. Reasons and effects.

**Experience of migration**

* Reasons for migration.

* Degree to which expectations were fulfilled.

* Activities in US and opinions of work situation, job etc., especially in relation to activities undertaken in Mexico.

* Opinions of men and women in the US labour market.

* General living conditions.

* Community participation

* Family life, both of migrant(s) and others.

* Relationship with accompanying migrants - did this change from that which existed before migration? If a single migrant, how were relationships with household members left behind affected?

* Impacts on children (if any).

* Comparison with Mexico in terms of values, customs and culture.

* Degree of freedom in US in relation to that in Mexico in terms of decision-making, ability to control own activities etc.

* Financial management.
* Perceptions of men’s and women’s roles in US.

* Perceptions of how the migrant(s) was(were) affected by the migration.

* Changes in attitude/outlook

* Ideas about US culture.

**Experience of return**

* Reasons for return.

* Attitudes of other household members to migrant’s return. Changes in their behaviour/activities after migrant’s return.

* Finding work and kind of work obtained in relation to that undertaken before and during migration.

* Financial difficulties / use of savings accumulated through migration.

* Re-adaptation

* Changes in migrant’s behaviour, attitudes and activities.

* Migrant’s relationship with other household members in comparison to those before migration.

* Discussion of migrant’s return in relation to expectations (both of migrant and others).
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I analysed thematically the interview notes which I compiled in this way. By this I refer to the process in which I read and re-read my notes, developing a list of themes which I modified through subsequent readings. Once I had finalised a list of important and recurrent themes, I searched for and marked the occurrence of these themes in each interview. I then used the coded interview notes to compile detailed information on each of the themes identified, which then formed the core of my qualitative analysis.

The questionnaire survey identified 78 migrants from 34 migrant households, 31 of whom were female, 47 male. Of these 78 migrants, 35 were current migrants and 43 were return migrants, according to the definitions given in Section 4.4. Eleven of these 78 migrants were 15 years old or younger, while 60 were 16 and over and the age of the other seven was unknown. Where figures in the tables deviate from the totals given here, this is due either to missing data or to the definition of a subset of migrants with certain characteristics for a particular table.